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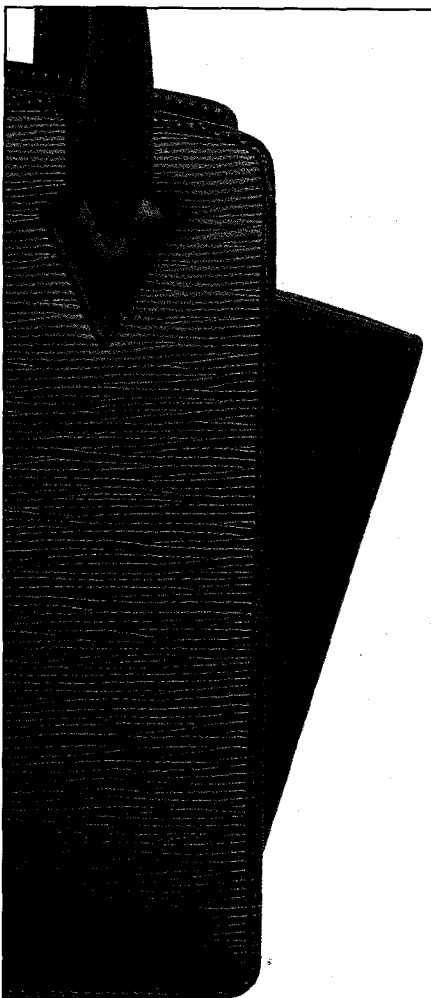
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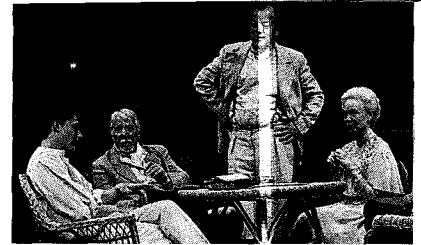
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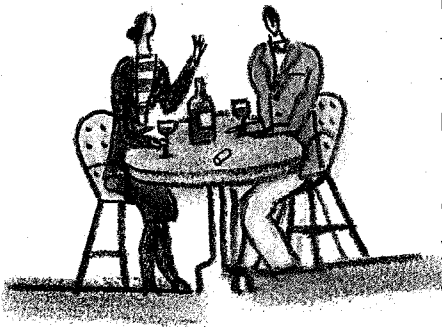
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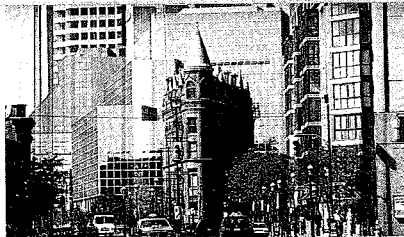
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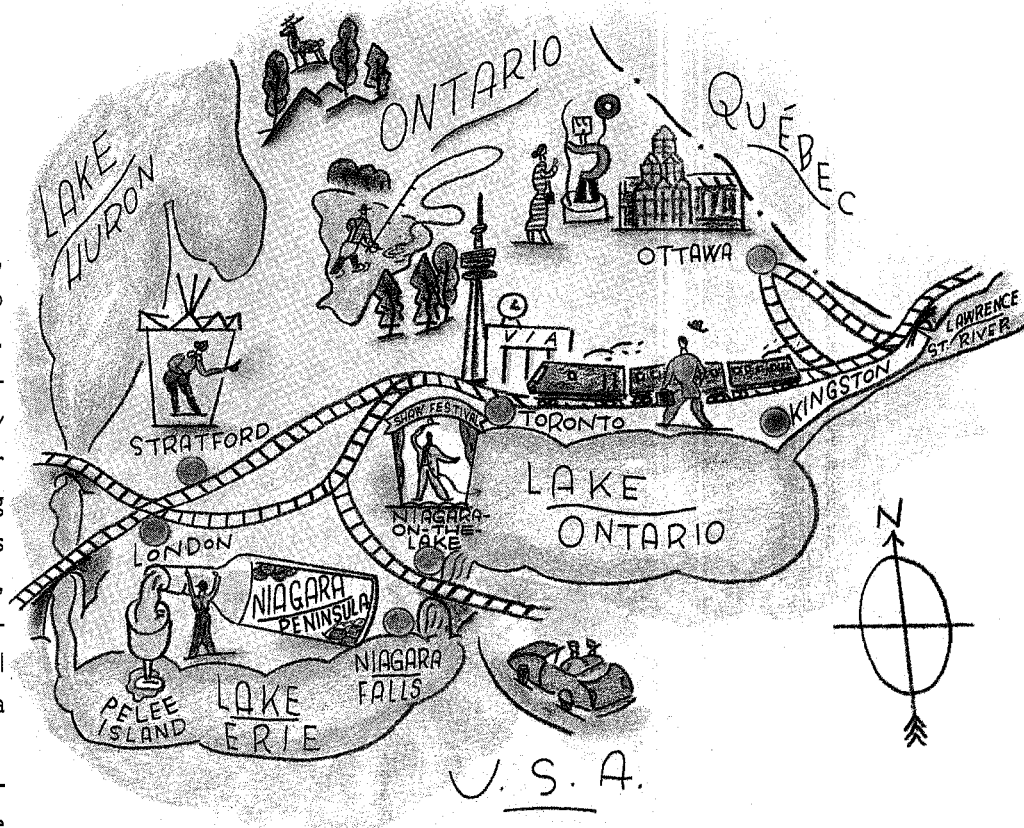
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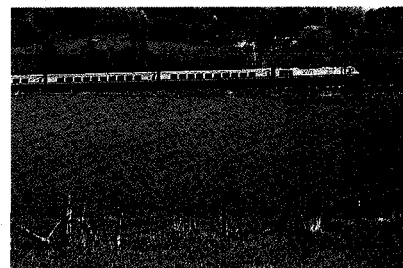
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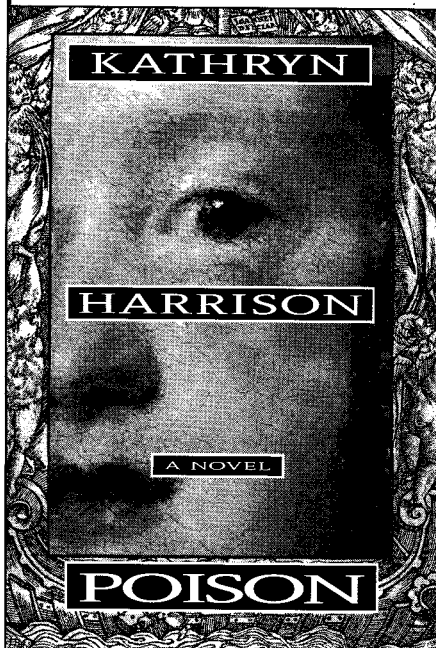
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VIOLENCE AS STYLE

In Oklahoma City, romantic rhetoric got horribly real.

TERROR STRIKES THE HEARTLAND," read one headline, echoing a note widely sounded in the immediate aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing. But, even before the revelation that this particular atrocity had been as homegrown as a bushel of wheat, the alibi of foreign infection already seemed evasive. For the heartland was in many ways where terror began. The practice of political terrorism has been refined in Europe and the Middle East, but its theory—the understanding that in an age of instant communications killing can be a kind of symbolic speech, a form of show business, engaged in for its publicity value—was pioneered by Americans. It was out West, among the frontier outposts, that the vigilante groups of the mid-nineteenth century—Bald Knobbers, White Caps, and Regulators—developed the practice of killing people in order to send a message. Lynch somebody in New Mexico and they'll get the word in Oregon. Unlike the city-bred (and usually foreign-born) anarchists of a generation or two later, the vigilantes had no interest in notions of universal brotherhood. They saw

themselves as personifying an authentic, organic Americanism, the very opposite of the procedural Americanism of laws and legislators and United States marshals. Last week's bombers in Oklahoma City fit all too well into that bloody tradition, and are all too faithful to its code: Stop thinking of the other person as a person and start thinking of him as an occasion—a blank slate on which to inscribe a Thought for the Day.

The vigilantes were always a weird mixture of fraternal lodge and Murder, Inc., and so are the militias of today. Blood lust shares time with the lure of the secret handshake. The years of the founding of the American West marked the advent of a peculiarly American confusion, from which America has never really emerged: the intertwining of real violence and its romance. Violence gets so tangled up with group symbolism that it becomes a demotic idiom, even a kind of slang. Until the moment when the bullet strikes home or the bomb goes off, it all looks disarmingly like Culture. Wild Bill Hickok killed people, and then went on Broadway to show how it was done. Jesse James was a bank rob-

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ber and a killer, but within seven weeks of his death his wife and his mother had a book ghostwritten explaining that he was just misunderstood—all he was trying to do was make a point on behalf of Confederate war veterans.

Anyone who has spent time reading—“monitoring” is the term of art—the literature of the militias and the survivalists might be forgiven for assuming that they, too, have been engaged in a cultural charade, a game, something like a hobby. For instance, the April issue of *American Survival Guide*, the consumer magazine of the militia movement, doesn't seem very different in its ingenuous tone and style from an issue of *All Chevy* or *Classic Trucks*, which its publisher, McMullen & Yee, also puts out. An article on raising emus (a kind of ostrich) for fun and profit runs several pages after the column “On Reality,” where you can read about the Clinton Administration's “abhorrence for the American people” (“They”—the Clinton gang—“must be stopped, if not for us then for our children and for their children”). On one page you can find an ad for a closeout on the 1995 Women & Weaponry Calendar, which features hot-looking babes wearing bandoliers as halter tops, and on the next you can send away for a claymore mine and a bazooka accurate to three hundred yards. In the personals, a lonely guy from Texas announces that he is forming a group “to take action against the up and coming demise of our country,” and adds, “The weak hearted need not reply.” But another fellow, from Spokane, just wishes to survive “the turmoil of the immature, ignorant and irrational,” and is seeking a “survivalist/warrioress/philosopher.” The wild nuts tend to turn pretty quickly into pathetic nuts, even likable nuts: in the letters section, a now chilling question asking “Would it be possible for you to advise me as to how I might contact any local militia units in the Midwest?” follows one that hints at the damp reality of Survivalist Weekend Training: “What is the best way to clean/freshen-up a down bag?”

If violence in America leads a kind of double life, as both folk culture and real killing, that double life has produced the peculiarly American overlap of style with action, rhetoric with reality. We are all implicated in this: the intellectual writing for the *Times* who pretends that

gangsta rap is part of a continuum with Baptist preaching; the *frisson*-seeking movie critic who wants his “Pulp Fiction” and cannot see that having it might help explain why he cannot allow his children out after five o'clock in the afternoon; and the right-wing thinkers and politicians who have spent fifteen years inventing a demonic abstract enemy called the federal government and now have to explain that they never meant to be taken literally.

Our readiness to explain away violence as style might be called the Anthropological Temptation: everything becomes a hobby, a bit of Americana, a colorful subculture in the pluralistic kaleidoscope. But what happens when the people you patronizingly encouraged, because you thought they were engaged in style and metaphor, turn out to have meant exactly what they said? The American left is familiar with this problem, because it was the left's trendily succumbing to the romance of violence that, more than any other one thing, did it in in the late sixties and early seventies as a serious political force. In those days, the idea that violence was redemptive in itself led Norman Mailer to praise two kids for killing a candy-store owner, and led New Leftists like Peter Collier and David Horowitz (then the editors of *Ramparts*) to become infatuated with

the thuggery of the Black Panthers. It wasn't that the left loved violence, exactly, but that the left—or, anyway, too much of it—liked the thrill of seeing its musty intellectual beliefs acted out as dashing cultural theatre. (The left's bombs, though, were often duds, unlike the right's—the difference between the kids who paid attention in social studies and the ones who paid attention in shop.)

In the first couple of days after the Oklahoma City horror, conservative commentators clamored to make clear that they, at least, were able to see that you can't separate inflammatory rhetoric from violent acts—that ideas have consequences. Just after the bombing, when it seemed likely that Islamic militants had done it, Rupert Murdoch's New York flagship, the *Post*, was prepared to throw the book not only at the presumed terrorists but at their whole network of ideological support and encouragement—what the *Post* called, scarily, their “terror links.” One headline read, “TERROR-LINK GROUPS MET REGULARLY IN OKLAHOMA CITY,” and the story described militant Muslim groups as meeting for “jihad conventions,” in which various sheikhs say things like “Attend shooting practice. There is nothing greater than the shot.” Of course, the right quickly found itself obliged to pull a one-eighty, leaving skid



"I'll have this guy, this guy, and this guy."



"It is unbelievable how time flies: all our children are divorced, too."

marks and the smell of burning rubber all over the information highway. By Sunday morning—four days after the explosion—George Will and Robert Novak were making delicate civil-libertarian noises about guilt by association and how climates of opinion shouldn't be construed as chains of causal connection. Will followed up with a column on the subject for the *Washington Post*, conceding that ideas produce actions but dismissing the past two years as a cool technocratic debate about "the duties and capacities of government." At the same time, in a *Newsweek* column, evidently written before the Oklahoma City revelations, Will fêted the right-wing congressional fruitcake Robert Dornan (who routinely calls anyone to the left of Bob Dole a traitor), chortling at Dornan's flair for "verbal napalm" and promising that his presence in the Presidential race would make the Republican campaign "more fun than a food fight." Some fun. And by Monday afternoon Rush Limbaugh himself was mocking the phrase "right-wing extremists" and rounding up the usual suspects: the fault, he explained, lay with the liberals, who, back in the sixties and seventies, had tied the hands of the F.B.I. A couple of months earlier, discussing supposed environmental trappings on property rights, he predicted, "The second violent

American revolution is just about—I got my fingers about a quarter of an inch apart—is just about that far away. Because these people are sick and tired of a bunch of bureaucrats in Washington driving into town and telling them what they can and can't do with their land."

The point, of course, isn't that Limbaugh or Pat Robertson or G. Gordon Liddy caused the killing. It is that they seemed never to have given a moment's thought, as they addressed their audiences, to the consequences of stuffing so much flammable resentment into such tiny bottles. Conservatives are generally clear-headed about the connection between rhetoric and action when it comes to people who are not conservatives. A generation ago, conservatives had no trouble associating "revolutionary" sloganeering of the "by any means necessary" variety with the bomb that shattered the math building at the University of Wisconsin. And when it comes to Leonard Jeffries or Louis Farrakhan today, it is not hard for George Will or Murdoch's *Post* to insist, against the grain of liberal indulgence, that if you daily inject hatred into the bloodstream someone might get sick.

That's a fair point. Timothy McVeigh may be a nut, but nuts don't fall far from the tree. Fifty years from now, historians are unlikely to write, "In the mid-nineties, politicians and talk-show radio

hosts created an atmosphere of poisonous hatred against the national government. Also, in a completely unrelated development, somebody blew up the federal office building in Oklahoma City." What they will write is more apt to be something like "In the mid-nineties, an atmosphere of poisonous hatred of the national government was allowed to grow in America; a few right-wing extremists even went as far as to bomb a federal building." The problem is not that the militias have been mysteriously infiltrated by extremists but that the federal government has, especially in the past two years, been inflated into an imaginary hate-object big enough for a nut. That's happened with the enthusiastic help of "mainstream" right-wing paranoia: Bill Clinton is an illegitimate President; liberals are the enemies of normal Americans; gun control is a conspiracy to tyrannize the populace; a New World Order is being put in place by foreign bankers. These are the ideas of Pat Robertson and Pat Buchanan and the N.R.A.—ideas, in other words, that a section of the "responsible" right in this country has spent the last few years legitimating and circulating. It is no great exaggeration to say that *American Survival Guide* is just *The American Spectator* with bazooka ads.

Of course, the difference is that the militia right comes armed with ideas and guns, whereas the mainstream far right comes armed only with ideas. Not a meaningless difference but not a decisive one, either, as we discover when the ideas being promoted are the kind whose logical consequence is to make somebody else want to go pick up a gun. It turns out that there isn't one world of cultural theatre and another world of real acts. The terrorists, though, had come to believe they weren't bombing a building full of people but obliterating an abstract object of hate. The "grievances" that are said to have moved them seem, on examination, curiously bloodless—things seen on television and in "instructional" videos rather than actually experienced. The people who had helped teach them to view the world as a set of easy abstractions, rather than as intricate arrangements made by human beings and inhabited by them, are under no obligation to take the blame for what happened. But it would be nice to see a little remorse. —ADAM GOPNIK

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I DO IT EVERY

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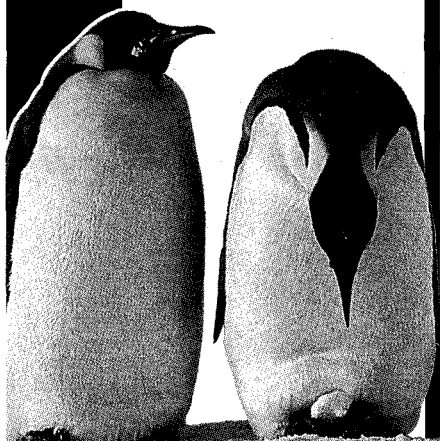


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AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Michael Kinsley's article "The Spoils of Victimhood" (March 27th) counters two arguments against affirmative action—those of economic efficiency and of fairness. But it is one thing to present a problem and illuminate a path toward its solution; it is quite another to say that government should be leading us down that path.

Classic liberals see government as both the cause of and the cure for all society's evils. But while past governmental policies have nurtured and protected sexism, racism, and many other isms, the prejudice that exists in today's children comes overwhelmingly from what they experience in the realms of family, friends, television, and music. Prejudice has become an intensely personal, cultural, and nongovernmental illness. The argument against affirmative action that Kinsley ignores is similar to one that may well have been used against Prohibition: that alcoholism is a danger to society, and government can have a limited role in fighting it through drunk-driving laws and alcohol taxes, but ultimately it is an intimate battle that must be waged by individuals, not by the institutions to which they pay taxes.

CHRIS NORLIN
Los Angeles, Calif.

African-Americans cannot make it without white largesse. He also ignores the fact that affirmative action tends to help only people already helping themselves—i.e., those African-Americans least in need—while doing nothing for the ones trapped in the urban morass of crime, absentee fathers, and welfare.

DANIEL ROBBINS
New York City

When Mr. Kinsley refers to the continued existence of traditional racism as a "boring" fact, I can think only of a very tired William Buckley, Jr. On a personal level, it was definitely not "boring" when, as a child in Washington, D.C., I was sent to the back of the bus with my dark-skinned Mexican father. It was painful and frightening—and that's hardly the worst of what happens to people of color. Kinsley's choice of words cannot be dismissed as a small slip of stylistic judgment. Rather, it points to a bottomless gulf in our society, for I cannot imagine that any non-white person seriously considers today's racism "boring." In the end, that single adjective presents a powerful argument for affirmative action. Your author could have saved his breath.

ELIZABETH MARTINEZ
San Francisco, Calif.

A LITTLE O.J.

Mired in the ambiguities of "color-blind equal opportunity," Mr. Kinsley ignores the strongest argument against affirmative action: it harms those it was designed to help. Not only does affirmative action foment racial divisiveness but it also renders the accomplishments of African-Americans suspect while assaulting black self-esteem. Kinsley actually praises the "rough-and-ready" shorthand of "Black equals disadvantaged" as a workable generalization, promoting the defeatist myth that

Jeffrey Toobin admits in "Ito and the Truth School" (March 27th) that truth-schoolism is nothing new. Every fascist state supports untrammelled police access to your home. It is a necessary component of repression: "If you have nothing to hide, why worry?" Repressive legal rules can usually be overturned only by revolution. We had our bloody Revolution more than two hundred years ago; afterward, our Founders considered the alternatives and specifically presented us

with the Fourth Amendment, which forbids warrantless searches and seizures. We, the People, approved it. And while the reactionary mob on the California Supreme Court and the three hangmen on the United States Supreme Court may support the regressive decisions of Judge Ito and others of his ilk, they do so in violation of the ringing language of the Founders.

Those who promote a police state by calling it "truth" are selling poison in perfume bottles. The monetary awards of a tort claim are no substitute for the right of citizens to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects. It's messy, but that's what democracy is about. As for this "truth school," to wildly paraphrase your own E. B. White, I say it's spinach, and I say I'm not going to swallow it.

ROBERT W ABRAMS
New York City

I was dismayed to find Annie Leibovitz's photographic series "Los Angeles, 1995" in your April 3rd issue. Unlike Mr. Toobin's article "Ito and the Truth School," which provided a thoughtful analysis of the trial's role in shaping our judicial system, the Leibovitz spread was yet another instance of the media feeding the unfortunate trend toward voyeurism now pervading our society. While I in no way dispute Leibovitz's accomplishments as a photographer, I believe that the publication of these photographs exhibited an utter lack of taste and a disregard for human dignity.

JANET BRIDGLAND
Monticello, Minn.

Memories of the blond, tanned, and toned blank slates who attended my English classes at a University of California campus in the nineteen-eighties came flooding back the moment I saw Annie Leibovitz's photo of Kato Kaelin in the April Fools' issue. There again was the familiar figure, this time armed with the tools of his trade: a wall-size mirror, a blow-dryer, and an array of cosmetics on the vanity counter. Kato is often described as "quirky," which seems to be the media's designated euphemism for idiotic. But why the nervous fascination with the house guest who has unpacked his bags for a prolonged stay in the national psyche? Simple. He's our

future—rootless, brainless, culturally decontextualized, and right at home in the air-conditioned nightmare. He scares us even while we're making fun of him. Brilliantly, Leibovitz's piece contains only reflected images of Kato; she places the "real" Kato where he belongs—right next to us.

GARY L. KRIEWALD
Dallas, Texas

CANON FODDER

Andrew Delbanco's thoughtful Comment on the ideological polarization in America's universities ("Contract with Academia," March 27th) struck one distressingly false note: quoting a personal letter from a "young woman who is an English major at a distinguished liberal-arts college," Delbanco implies that in American institutions of higher learning students are no longer asked to read the classics—that, instead, only the works of minority writers are taught. He fails to mention, however, that the young woman whose letter he quotes—who has read nothing by Wordsworth, Milton, or Faulkner but has read Toni Morrison, Gabriel García Márquez, and Adrienne Rich—chose her courses. No university literature department I know of forces students to take only courses devoted to contemporary works by minorities. In fact, every major (and, I would guess, minor) college or university in this country continues to devote the large majority of its literature courses to the classics—from Homer and the Bible to Proust, Hemingway, and Virginia Woolf.

The authors the young woman has studied are incontestably worth studying (they include two Nobel Prize winners), and it is one of the most positive developments in higher education of the past twenty years that they are being taught in our universities. Now she should seek out the others—those she has so far avoided. The courses are there—it is up to her to register for them. Delbanco is right to say that "polemical label-mongering of this kind doesn't do much to advance reasoned discussion." Neither does the spreading of powerful polemical myths with no foundation in reality.

SUSAN R. SULEIMAN
Professor of Romance and Comparative Literatures
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

IN PRAISE OF POETRY

As J. D. McClatchy's loving portrait of James Merrill (Postscript, March 27th) suggests, Merrill's privileged upbringing and highbrow verse both ask and answer the question of poetry's relevance. The depth of Merrill's talent, however, leaves the question moot, reminding us that mastery as rare as Merrill's always justifies itself.

JEREMY MICHAELSON
St. Louis, Mo.

ARE YOU SLEEPING?

Michael Kelly's rather gloomy preview of President Clinton's 1996 reelection strategy ("A Place Called Fear," April 3rd) seems to have overlooked one very important, and fairly obvious, fact: if the number of American voters is little changed in 1996, then adopting the time-honored Republican tactic of fear will not help Clinton very much. The real message of the 1994 elections was not that America took a hard turn to the right but that approximately sixty-one per cent of the American electorate voted for none-of-the-above by staying home on Election Day. I make that an almost two-to-one victory. By any rational (as opposed to legal) standard, the congressional majority has only a very tenuous mandate to govern—one that is certainly more tenuous than the mandate Clinton received in 1992. The President has nothing to lose by defining himself against this ultra-minority Congress.

I believe that most clear-minded adults would agree that what America still needs is a clear choice and a sense of hope and direction. Clinton conveyed that sense in 1992. He probably won't be able to convince many voters in 1996 that he still comes from Hope, but by going negative now he only panders to cynicism, and that will hardly propel the dormant sixty-one-per-cent majority to an enthusiastic reaffirmation of democracy.

RICHARD R. KNABEL
Tarrytown, N.Y.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail" The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

AFTER-PLAY—Anne Meara's play, recently seen at the Manhattan Theatre Club, is in previews at a new venue, with Ms. Meara in a starring role. Also with Barbara Barrie, Larry Keith, and Merwin Goldsmith. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

ALL ABOUT STEVE: MUSINGS OF AN EBONY QUEER—In his new solo work, Stephen Patterson takes a comic look at growing up gay, black, and liberal. In previews through May 5. Opens May 6 at 11. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 923-9300.)

DOG OPERA—In Constance Congdon's new comedy, Kristine Nielson and Albert Macklin portray a pair of insecure city dwellers looking for love. In previews through the May 7 matinee. Opens that evening at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

A DOLL'S HOUSE—The Other Theatre presents Ibsen's classic. Opens May 3 at 8 and runs through May 20. (Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. 969-0212.)

THE DONAHUE SISTERS—Alma Cuervo, Terry Donnelly, and Carolyn McCormick play siblings reuniting at their family's ancestral home in Ireland, in this play by Geraldine Aron. Nye Heron directed. In previews. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATER—This year's six-week one-act marathon begins with Edward Allan Baker's "A Dead Man's Apartment," Arthur Miller's "The Ryan Interview, or How It Was Around Here," Thornton Wilder's "The Wreck on the Five-Twenty-Five," and Yvonne Adrian's "Fly Boy." The first series runs through May 14; the marathon continues through June 11. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405.)

EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES—James Lecesne stars in a new musical-theatre work, written and directed by Eve Ensler, about a gathering at a dying man's bedside. William Harper wrote the music. In previews through May 3. Opens May 4 at 7:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

THE LAST GIRL SINGER—A former movie star makes a new start as a cabaret singer, in Deborah Grace Winer's new comedy. With Kelly Bishop, Bill Tatum, and Charlotte Maier. Charles Maryan directed. In previews through May 8. Opens May 9 at 8. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 765-1706.)

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS: A FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCES—Theatre for the New City offers three weeks of works, beginning with "Woman Without Adornment," written and performed by Thulani Davis and Bernadette Speech; Deb Margolin's "Bearing Witness," performed by Rae C. Wright; and "Traces of a Mother," a solo performance by Joanne Schultz. Opens May 4 at 7. (155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)

MY THING OF LOVE—Infidelity is the subject and Laurie Metcalf is the star of Alexandra Gersten's new play. Also with Tom Irwin, Sheila Kelley, and Mark Blum. Opens May 3 at 7. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

PAL JOEY—Patti Lupone, Peter Gallagher, and Bebe Neuwirth star in a concert version of the 1940 Rodgers and Hart classic. The engagement runs only



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

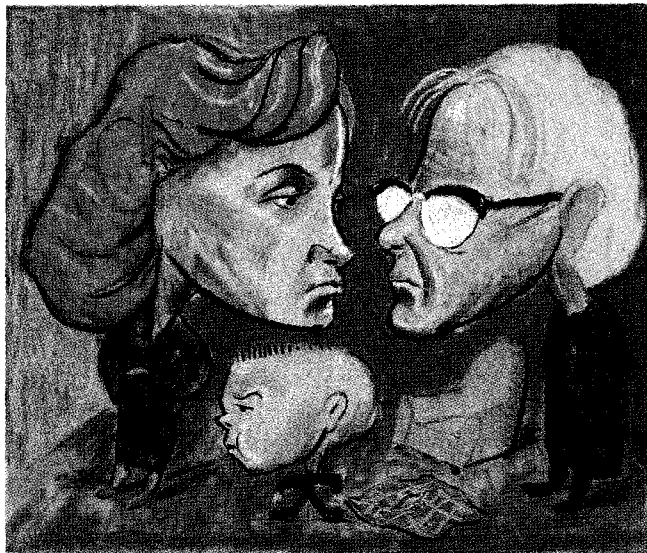
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three days, May 4-6. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

PARTY—Seven gay men spend an evening playing an elaborate truth-or-dare game, in a comedy written and directed by David Dillon. In previews. (Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

PHAEDRA—Elizabeth Egloff's version of the Greek myth, directed by Evan Yionoulis. Previews through May 7. Opens May 8 at 8. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

POLICE BOYS—Playwrights Horizons presents Marion McClinton's new play, about the repercussions on a city police precinct when a fourteen-year-old gang member is arrested for rape and murder. In previews. (416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)



Felicity Huffman, Shelton Dane, and Ed Begley, Jr., in David Mamet's "The Cryptogram."

THE PROFESSIONAL—Fritz Weaver is a retired policeman and Jonathan Hogan is a publisher in this work by playwright Dusan Kovacevic, which is set in an Eastern European publishing house. In previews. (Circle Repertory Company, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200.)

SHABBATAI—A new musical by Michael Schubert and Michael Edwin, about the false Messiah of the seventeenth century, starring Maggi-Meg Reed. In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

SYLVIA—A. R. Gurney's new play, directed by John Tillingier, stars Blythe Danner, Sarah Jessica Parker, Charles Kimbrough, and Derek Smith. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AMPHITRYON—Those myths have staying power. Eric Overmyer's colloquial adaptation of the story of Alcmena—whom Jupiter tricks into thinking he's her husband, Amphitryon, and who ends up giving birth to Hercules—is based on Kleist's reinterpretation of Molière's version, and it's still not the least bit stale. The witty director, Brian Kulick, and his very funny cast pull off a spirited production that combines the best elements of all the previous incarnations. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

ARCADIA—Despite some casting glitches, the American premiere of Tom Stoppard's 1993 play, which shuttles back and forth between 1809 and the present, is an elegant production of an enormous theatrical feat. In a kind of intellectual mystery story, Stoppard provides the audience with the exhilarating illusion of omniscience, allowing us to solve a riddle of history from clues and connections that the characters, caught in time, do not see. Directed by Trevor Nunn. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/17/95.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

CAMPING WITH HENRY & TOM—Henry Ford (John Cunningham), Thomas Edison (Robert Prosky), and Warren Harding (Ken Howard) go camping together in Mark St. Germain's fictional account of an actual woodland episode from 1921. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)—This slapstick hour and a half romp through the Bard's oeuvre, carried out by three fine young gentlemen in high-tops, is utterly sophomoric and a complete waste of time—like some of the best things in life. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

THE CRYPTOGRAM—David Mamet's new play, which dramatizes a child's emotional abuse from the child's point of view, ranks with his best work and leaves an enormous after-shock. The actors in this excellent production are Ed Begley, Jr., Felicity Huffman, and Shelton Dane; Mr. Mamet directed. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

DAMN YANKEES—Jerry Lewis, the King of Comedy and the King of France, is now, in his Broadway debut, the Prince of Darkness—the Devil himself. The old pro delivers the goods. And Charlotte d'Amboise, a sensational Lola, delivers the goods and then some. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

DANCING ON MOONLIGHT—Keith Glover's new play, set in 1959-60, pits Harlem gangsters against one another in a story that is no more original than any tragic Mafia tale. Interspersed with rhythmic poetry reminiscent of Langston Hughes' are gambling, prostitution, drugs, a birth, and death aplenty, but the stylized production and choppy direction make an emotional connection difficult. A sparse, well-used set, evocative choreography, and subtle music by Max Roach help this troubled production. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

DEATH DEFYING ACTS—Three subpar one-act comedies, by David Mamet, Elaine May, and Woody Allen, that have the words "Written to Order" stamped all over them. (3/20/95) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

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ECSTASY—Mike Leigh's play is set in a dismal North London flat in the winter of 1979, and like some of his movies it has the kind of grungy bed-sitter realism in which light bulbs are always bare and the top sheet never matches the bottom one. The late-seventies costumes and set are depressingly perfect, and the actors bring the six working-class characters to life with great specificity and vitality. (Smokephobes take note: the theatre is tiny, and there's a whole lotta smoking going on.) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 924-0077. Closes May 14.)

GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL—The audience is part of the group of mourners in this comedy, which is set in a Jewish mortuary. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)



THE HAIRY APE—The Wooster Group's workshop production of Eugene O'Neill's 1922 drama, with Willem Dafoe, Kate Valk, and others. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes May 14.)

HAMLET—Ralph Fiennes is the Prince of Denmark in a production brought to our shores by London's Almeida Theatre Company. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

HAVING OUR SAY—Sadie and Bessie Delany, two sisters who have passed the hundred-year mark and have made a home together for three-quarters of a century, presented their vivid life stories in a 1993 best-seller; the book has been adapted beautifully from the page to the stage by Emily Mann, who also directed. Gloria Foster and Mary Alice are brilliant as the sisters, who, taught by their family to "reach high" despite the dogging of Jim Crow, became a teacher and a dentist. The show is both a portrait of a remarkable relationship and an unsentimental depiction of service, accomplishment, and pride. (4/24/95) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE HEIRESS—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 adaptation of Henry James's "Washington Square," directed by Gerald Gutierrez. Cherry Jones, who plays the title character, is exquisitely—almost unbearably—vulnerable. And the wonderful Frances Sternhagen is touching and funny as a widowed aunt. (3/20/95) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING—In this revival of Frank Loesser's 1961 musical, Matthew Broderick, as the ambitious window-washer J. Pierrepont Finch, has polish and good timing, but he doesn't have the crazy gene that makes a musical star. Lillias White's gospel solo in "Brotherhood of Man," however, lifts the audience into a zone of joy; as a paradigm for the Broadway musical's con game—winning the public's heart while picking its pocket—her display of guile made glorious is as good as it gets. (4/24/95) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

HUNGER AND THIRST—Eugene Ionesco's play, presented by the Independent Theatre Company. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes May 6.)

INDISCRETIONS—The first Broadway staging of "Les Parents Terribles," the 1938 play by

Jean Cocteau. Kathleen Turner, Eileen Atkins, Roger Rees, Jude Law, and Cynthia Nixon make up the cast. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

JAMES LECESNE'S WORD OF MOUTH—The actor's remarkably varied solo show. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN—A drama by Chay Yew about four gay men, played by B. D. Wong, Alec Mapa, Francis Jue, and David Drake. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes May 14.)

LONDON SUITE—Neil Simon knows how to cater to his audience, but in this follow-up to "Plaza Suite" and "California Suite" he's serving leftovers: the four one-acts are painfully dated in both their substance and

their execution. The main pleasure in this production, which marks Simon's first-ever foray into the wilds of Off Broadway, is Carole Shelley, who provides some much needed comic muscle tone. Also with Paxton Whitehead, Kate Burton, and Jeffrey Jones. Daniel Sullivan directed. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

LOVE! VALOUR! COMPASSION!—The eight gay men in Terrence McNally's beautifully written drama connect in ways that almost any nuclear family would envy. Under the nimble direction of Joe Mantello, the actors present humbling evidence of what love is and can be. (11/14/94) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY—The English actress Helen Mirren makes her Broadway debut in the Roundabout's staging of the Turgenev classic. With Ron Rifkin and F. Murray Abraham. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

MORTICIANS IN LOVE—A dark comedy by Christi Stewart-Brown. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 307-4100. Closes May 7.)

MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION—The bordello magnate who is the title character in George Bernard Shaw's 1898 drama makes a strong case for young women who choose to work in high-class brothels rather than ruin their health for a pittance in lead factories (or make loveless marriages). Margo Skinner plays Kitty Warren so forcefully that she partially undermines Shaw's design—this Mrs. Warren seems to crush all moral objections to her profession, especially the ones that her splendidly independent but less persuasive daughter (Chelsea Altman) offers. Otherwise, director Alex Dimitriev and the Pearl Theatre Company have mounted a satisfying production. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802. Closes May 7.)

NIGHT AND HER STARS—Moviegoers who have seen "Quiz Show" will experience an unpleasant déjà vu watching Richard Greenberg's play about the nineteen-fifties game-show scandals. It's even harder the second time around to stomach Charles Van Doren as a tragic hero. By the time Greenberg tries a fresh angle, in the second act, it's too late—you're already fretting that Ralph Fiennes is just around the corner, playing Hamlet. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

ON THE WATERFRONT—Budd Schulberg and Stan Silverman have adapted Schulberg's 1954 screenplay for the stage. The cast includes Penelope Ann Miller, Kevin Conway, and Ron Eldard. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

THE ONLY THING WORSE YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME...—Dan Butler's one-man show takes a look at contemporary gay culture. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 307-4100.)

RYAN'S RESOURCES—This semiautobiographical comedy by Jeannie Barroga stars Luna Borromeo as the title character, a Philippine immigrant. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes May 13.)

ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN—A hundred-minute standup routine. Some of Becker's examples of discontent between the sexes are very funny (a lot of vigorous nodding goes on in the theatre—never by men and women at the same time), but a fair number of them are shopworn. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

THE ROSE TATTOO—Mercedes Ruehl and Anthony LaPaglia star in a forty-fifth-anniversary production of Tennessee Williams' play. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

A ROYAL AFFAIR—An illegal alien and some aristocrats meet up in this comedy by Luis San-teiro. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes May 7.)

SEDUCED—The 1978 Sam Shepard play, starring Paul D'Amato as the Howard Hughes figure. (Kraime, 85 E. 4th St. 332-0727.)

SHOW BOAT—Harold Prince's epic-size production of the 1927 Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II musical: full of life and full of vision. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SKIN—Love and death on a hot day in San Diego, by Naomi Iizuka. Directed by John Edward McGrath. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 869-5350.)

SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ—THE SONGS OF LEIBER AND STOLLER—A feast of early rock and roll, performed by a cast with Grade A lungs and legs. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

SUNSET BOULEVARD—Glenn Close continues her triumphant run as Norma Desmond. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

SWINGTIME CANTEN—A re-creation of a 1944 U.S.O. concert, performed in a night club. Extraneous bits of plot threaten to derail the show, but the lovely songs, done with verve and charm, carry the day. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

TOO JEWISH?—Avi Hoffman sets about reviving Yiddish—with music—in this revue, a mixture of songs and stories. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT—Giles Havergal, directing his own witty adaptation of Graham Greene's novel, has captured the book's amusingly puzzled tone with his playful, inventive (though overlong) staging. Four wildly different actors—Brian Murray, Jim Dale, Martin Rayner, and Tom Beckett—all play Henry Pulling, the staid retired banker whose eccentric Aunt Augusta drags him into her international adventures. Dale doubles as Aunt Augusta, and the other three skillfully handle some twenty other parts, large and small, ranging from a Cockney cabdriver to an Irish wolfhound. The jowly, growly Murray impersonating a teenage girl is a sight to behold. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

TWO JOHNS KISSIN LESLIE—A new show in a new home, by the improv troupe Chicago City Limits. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

VARLA AND THE MAN WHO GOT AWAY—Predictable camp in the form of a mock-autobiographical cabaret show. If only the six-foot, redheaded Varla Jean Merman (Jeff Roberson), the putative daughter of Ethel Merman and Ernest Borgnine, had an ounce of her mother's vocal talent—or her father's—she would be sitting pretty. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

YEPETO—A comedy by the Argentine playwright Roberto Cossa opens the twenty-ninth-anniversary season of the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. Performances in Spanish alternate with ones in English. (304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes May 14.)

LONG RUNS

ALL IN THE TIMING: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS** (celebrating its thirty-fifth anniversary): Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GREASE!** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **AN INSPECTOR CALLS:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JACKIE MASON: POLITICALLY INCORRECT:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY ROLL:** Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **THREE TALL WOMEN:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—May 3 at 8: "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "Beethoven Romance," "Chiaroscuro," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ May 4 at 8: "Raymonda Variations," "2 & 3 Part Inventions," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ May 5 at 8: "Ash," "Episodes & Sarcasms," "Huoah," and "Jeu de Cartes." . . . ¶ May 6 at 2: "Raymonda Variations," "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "Huoah," and "Glass Pieces." . . . ¶ May 6 at 8: "Donizetti Variations," "Beethoven Romance," "The Four Temperaments," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ May 7 at 1: "Ash," "Chiaroscuro," "2 & 3 Part Inventions," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." . . . ¶ May 7 at 7: "Monumentum pro Gesualdo/Movements for Piano and Orchestra," "Red Angels," "Dances at a Gathering," and "Jeu de Cartes." . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: "Chaconne," "Episodes," and "I'm Old Fashioned." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 25.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—May 3 at 2 and 8: "Giselle." . . . ¶ May 4 at 8: "Airs," "Cruel World," and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ May 5 and May 8-9 at 8, and May 6 at 2 and 8: "La Bayadère." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 17.)

"THE MINSTREL SHOW"—Donald Byrd/The Group brings a full-length satire of blackface variety shows to 651's World Series. Byrd's take on "Giselle" was one of the wince-free pleasures of last January's Altogether Different series at the Joyce. With his ability to fashion individual moves that delight his dancers, Byrd lightens the ironies, and his projects sparkle. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. May 6 at 8 and May 7 at 3.)

"DYNASTIES: CHINA IN DANCE"—From folklore, contemporary descriptions, and paintings, the dancer Zhongmei Li and her company interpret Chinese dances from the Zhou dynasty of 1027 B.C. through the Qing dynasty of the nineteenth century. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 3 and 5 at 8, May 4 at 7:30, May 6 at 2 and 8, and May 7 at 2 and 7:30.)

"RED SPOT"—H. T. Chen, whose choreography blends modern dance with Asian storytelling,

presents a full-length work about the tumultuous events—birth, marriage, and death—that the Chinese associate with the color red. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 4-6 at 8 and May 7 at 3. Through May 14.)

MIMI GARRARD DANCE THEATRE—The company, known for technological experimentation (computerized lighting, film, slide projection, etc.), is beginning its fourth decade. The three-week engagement continues with "Time Piece" (1991), "Gloves" (1979), "Pot-pourri" (première), "The Screen" (1985), "Exchange" (1984), and "Renderings" (1995). (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 864-2929. May 5-6 at 8 and May 7 at 3. Through May 14.)

BATTERY DANCE COMPANY AND MALLIKA SARABHAI—On May 5, the Indian dancer Mallika Sarabhai performs her evening-length solo, "Sita's Daughters." For the rest of the engagement, she appears with the company in the première of Jonathan Hollander's "Songs of Tagore," set to the love songs of the Indian poet, and the company performs three other works by Hollander. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 4 at 7:30, May 5-6 at 8, and May 7 at 3.)

"MUSIC, DANCE, AND THEATRE OF BALI: MONKEYS, WARRIORS, AND CLOWNS"—For a symposium devoted to the monkey character in literature and performance, the Asia Society presents an evening of warrior dance, dance theatre, shadow puppetry, and gamelan music. (Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. May 6 at 8.)

"INTIMATE DUETS"—Patricia Beaman dances with James Martin, and Art Bridgeman with Myrna Packer. Following the performance, the dancer-choreographers will discuss the works with the audience. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 7 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

Little No More

JOHNNY GRIFFIN, who has the floor at the Blue Note through May 7, came roaring out of Chicago in the late forties, snorting the blues and playing the tenor sax faster than anybody thought humanly possible. In the late fifties, he replaced John Coltrane in Thelonious Monk's groundbreaking quartet; later he formed a partnership with another tenor demon, Eddie (Lockjaw) Davis. Then, when the going got tough for jazz musicians in the sixties, Griffin split for Europe. But his low profile became a commercial liability: he was filed away as a living legend—out of sight and out of mind.

Life overseas transformed him, though. He went from sprinter to poet; his tone grew more forceful. He began to favor melody over speed, and naked emotion came to fuel his playing. His recordings became delightfully crafted affairs, with handpicked bands, brass sections, and guest stars. And his live gigs have turned into events—one of the great joys of this decade has been watching him count off a backbreaking tempo while his young sidemen quake in their boots. They used to call Johnny Griffin the Little Giant. These days, you can call him the greatest living bop tenor.

JAÏPUR
Le nouveau parfum de Boucheron.

BOUCHERON
PARIS

BLOOMINGDALE'S • SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

CONCERTS

- PAPA JUBE**—Haitian funk and R. & B. (Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. 966-4444. May 3 at 8.)
- ANITA BAKER**—After "Rapture," her mid-eighties commercial breakthrough, the reigning duchess of jazz-flavored R. & B. lapsed into a period of self-consciously sophisticated soul. Her new record, "Rhythm of Love," is a return to form, and her hornlike singing has never seemed so right. Live, she's pure intensity; her voice shakes the rafters. Get ready for love songs, nothing but love songs. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 3-4 and May 7 at 8.)
- ANDREA PARKINS TRIO**—Playing music for accordion, piano, and digital sampler. (Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. May 5 at 6. No tickets necessary.)
- JAZZ JAM**—With Barry Harris, Ray Drummond, John Hicks, Gary Bartz, and Claudio Roditi. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 6 at 8.)
- MARY BLACK**—This singer has the Irish knack for finding narrative in even the simplest refrains. On her recordings, a studio sheen sometimes obscures her soprano, especially on the softer, more New Age numbers. But on stage, she's enchanting. With the Rankin Family. (Town Hall. May 7 at 8.)
- HARRY CONNICK, JR.**—The New Orleans piano prodigy's career has not followed the expected progression: in his early twenties, he embraced swing and standards with a worldly sophistication; now, at twenty-seven, he's getting funky with a vengeance. Connick hasn't added much to the lexicon of funk, but his appreciation for his musicians is infectious, and it makes for an engaging show. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 9 at 8.)
- ANDREA MARCOVICCI**—The stylish chanteuse. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 9 at 8.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

- A.K.A.**, 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Hip-hop, jazz, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. May 4: **SERIOUS PILGRIM**. May 5: Funk with **MILO Z**.
- BLARNEY STAR**, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. May 5: Uilleann piper **MATTIE CONNOLLY**.
- BOTTOM LINE**, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. May 3: The folk-singing sisters **KATE & ANNA MC GARRIGLE**.
- BROWNIES**, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—May 5: Downtown rock with **SKELETON KEY** and the **VERY PLEASANT NEIGHBOR**. May 7: The cheerful sounds of **BUTT TRUMPET**.
- Café Sin-é**, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually packed with a young sandals-and-socks sort of crowd.
- CBGB & OMFUG**, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. May 4: **POSTER CHILDREN**. May 5: **THE VOLUPTUOUS HORROR OF KAREN BLACK**.
- CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S.**, 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. May 3-4: **EDDIE BURKES & DELTA BLUE**. May 5-6: **HOWARD SCOTT** and **KID DYNAMITE**.
- THE COOLER**, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender-and-stainless-steel dungeon deep in the heart of the meat district. May 6:



Harry Connick, Jr., at the Beacon Theatre.

- Greg Tate's **WOMEN IN LOVE**. Tuesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.
- FEZ**, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—May 5: **BLUE**, featuring singer-songwriter Rebecca Martin. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.
- IRVING PLAZA**, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. May 4: **ROYAL TRUX**. May 5: Singer-songwriter **TISH HINOJOSA**, whose music blends country, folk, honky-tonk, and salsa influences. ... ♪ Soul Kitchen, the original seventies funk and R. & B. party, goes down (late) every Tuesday. The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.
- KAPTAIN BANANA**, 101 Greene St. (343-9000)—French cabaret *en travesti* in SoHo. Three drag queens and eight dancers re-create the Court of Versailles, a carnival in Rio, Marlene Dietrich, and the Andrews Sisters. There's also a singing gorilla. Dining.
- KNITTING FACTORY**, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 4-6 and May 9: Howling with poet and Gap spokesman **ALLEN GINSBERG**.
- LIMELIGHT**, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. May 7: **COLLISION**. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.
- MATCH**, 160 Mercer St. (343-0020)—This hip SoHo *boîte* is the place to be every Sunday night, thanks to the **SHORTY JACKSON LEGACY BLUES BAND**. Dining.
- MAXWELL'S**, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201-798-4064)—May 4: **LUKA BLOOM**. Three years ago, this Irish folk-rocker had a brilliant idea: he took rapper LL Cool J's "I Need Love" and turned it into a hearty, brogue-inflected ballad. (At the Newport Folk Festival, he claimed that the song was actually written by his grandfather, "Mr. LL O'Cool J.") Bloom's own material is a bit less inspired, and he seems to have dropped off

the radar screen. But he remains an eclectic gem and a hell of a guitar player, too.

- MERCURY LOUNGE**, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Past the long bar, you'll find an exposed-brick room and a stage packed with some very hip rock acts. May 6: **SALLY TIMMS**.
- PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR**, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** plays on Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.
- ROSELAND**, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week it's another dark, sweaty rock club, with flannel-clad stage divers and the occasional whirling mosh pit. May 5: **TOAD THE WET SPROCKET**. This alternately hard-rocking and jangling quartet from Santa Barbara (their deceptively frivolous name was lifted from a Monty Python skit) had their first hit a few years ago with "All I Want," a ballad from their wonderful third album, "Fear." Their most recent offering, "Dulcinea," has a few excellent songs, too. With **RUSTED ROOT**.
- S.O.B.'s**, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Through May 4: Senegalese pop with **ISMAËL LO**. With **VIEUX DIOP**. May 5: **TABOU COMBO**. Tuesday nights, S.O.B.'s presents Flipping the Script, a set of rap and poetry. Thursday nights belong to Giant Step, a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. Dining.
- TRAMPS**, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—May 3: **KHALED** and **YODU 155**. May 6: "Mr. Bojangles," a.k.a. **JERRY JEFF WALKER**, the original Texas troubadour. With **BEAT RODEO**.
- WEBSTER HALL**, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.
- WETLANDS**, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—May 5: **THE TOASTERS**.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

- ALGONQUIN HOTEL**, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—May 9: Vocalist **JULIE BUDD** lights up the Oak Room with a salute to show tunes from the thirties. Dining.
- BIRDLAND**, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—May 5-6: **PETE (LA ROCA) SIMS**. Sims stood in the first row of the second rank when he was coming up in the sixties, but now he's firmly ensconced in the big leagues. He leads a spirited band that is a bit hampered by shifting personnel, but nabbing Dave Leibman, the great soprano saxophonist, was a major coup. Dining.
- BLUE NOTE**, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—May 7: a double bill featuring the **JOHNNY GRIFFIN** quartet and the **CEDAR WALTON** trio with **MILT JACKSON**. Griffin is a legendary bop-tenor saxman. Walton, a marvellous pianist, composer, and group leader, makes thoughtful, swinging music with his trio. Dining.
- BRADLEY'S**, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through May 6: a trio comprised of **JAYON JACKSON**, **STEPHEN SCOTT**, and **PETER WASHINGTON**. Jackson, a fluid and intelligent tenor saxophonist and an impressive fledgling hard-bopper, is on a roll; his "When the Time Is Right" was one of last year's keepers. He'll be joined by pianist extraordinaire Scott and the fine bassist Washington. Dining.
- CARLYLE HOTEL**, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and (through June) the amazing

BOBBY SHORT. Time has not diminished the tasteful virtuosity of his ivory-tickling, nor has it deflated his gregarious wit as a singer and showman. A fixture at the Carlyle, Short continues to give the royal treatment to gems by Gershwin, Ellington, Arlen, Berlin, and, of course, Cole Porter. A de-lightful, de-lovely evening.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Through May 7: the **SCOTT HAMILTON** quartet. When he hit New York nearly twenty years ago, Hamilton was like a fish out of water: while his fellow tenor saxophonists worshipped at the altar of Coltrane, this Rhode Island native was sifting through the classic swing of Lester Young and Illinois Jacquet. These days, guess who's got the last laugh? On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with fine jazz seven nights a week. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—**BOBBY WATSON**, here through May 7, is the Cannonball Adderly of our day: an exemplary alto player and a canny bandleader who revels in the pleasures of connecting with a crowd. Saxophonist **DONALD HARRISON** takes over on May 9.

RADIO WEST 43RD STREET

Songs from our own hit parade.

SOULFUL WIND (Nick Lowe, "The Impossible Bird").

OPTIMIST (Jack Logan, "Bulk").

HERE AND NOW (Del Amitri, "Twisted").

TONIGHT THE HEARTACHE'S ON ME
(Joy Lynn White, "Wild Love").

EIGHT FEET HIGH (Stacy Dean
Campbell, "Hurt City").

DOWNTOWN LIGHTS

(Annie Lennox, "Medusa").

11TH HOUR (Dionne Farris, "Wild
Seed-Wild Flower").

SENSUOUS WHISPER (Stevie Wonder,
"Conversation Peace").

BEDTIME STORY (Madonna, "Bedtime Stories").

SUMMER DRESS (Red House
Painters, "Ocean Beach").

LIGHTING FIRES (Grant McLennan,
"Horsebreaker Star").

FORCE OF NATURE (Graham Parker,
"Twelve Haunted Episodes").

HONEY BEE (Tom Petty, "Wildflowers").

SICK OF MYSELF (Matthew Sweet, "100% Fun").

MY NAME IS JONAS (Weezer, "Weezer").

SHARKS (Morphine, "Yes").

MURDER INCORPORATED (Bruce Springsteen,
"Greatest Hits").

LONE STAR SONG (Grant Lee Buffalo,
"Mighty Joe Moon").

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—May 3-6: Piano and bass with **BILL MAYS** and **TODD COLEMAN**. Mays is Mr. Taste, a cultivated mainstream pianist who has yet to play an inelegant phrase. Coleman has kept pace with top-shelf players like James Moody.

METROPOLIS, 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—May 5-6: Saxophonist **GEORGE COLEMAN**. Tuesdays are taken over by the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA**, a seventeen-piece swing band.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—**MARY CLEERE HARAN** (in through late May) uses her smile not to wow the room but to light her songs. Unlike many jazz-cabaret singers, she knows how to use dynamics, and sometimes she pulls her quick, ruffled vibrato up short, like Anita O'Day. She also loves to talk, and some of her monologues can become pocket essays, but she's witty and she has an appealing sotto-

voce giggle, and you know that the next song, like love, is just around the corner. . . . Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

SARDI'S, 234 W. 44th St. (221-8444)—May 5: Cabaret with the **JOE TRAINA** quintet. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through May 7: The **CARL ALLEN** quintet. If you've visited a few jazz clubs in the past year, chances are good that you've seen this drummer. Allen gets the work because he can juice up a band from the first note. He keeps his own group stocked with promising young players. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—**FRANK SINATRA, JR.**, and his twenty-piece orchestra finish up a two-week run on May 7. The great **JIMMY SCOTT** takes over on May 9.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through May 7: the **DAVID SANCHEZ** quartet. This young tenor player with the burly tone employs architectural phrasing that brings Sonny Rollins to mind. Conciseness isn't one of his strengths, but he has the makings of something big. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougall St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—The brainy and fleet bassist **MARC JOHNSON** swings by on May 3. May 4-6: The **JACK WALRATH** quintet. A quirky trumpeter, Walrath is perhaps best known for his tenure with Charles Mingus, and his writing and arranging skills exhibit the master's enduring influence. Dining.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through May 6: Piano, bass, and sax with **JUNIOR MANCE**, **CALVIN HILL**, and **JOE TEMPERLEY**. Dining.

ART

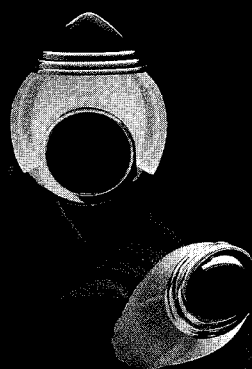
Block Party

BEFORE the advent of electronics and automobiles, the world's image of Japan came from ukiyo-e, those highly stylized wood-block prints of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (The term translates, enchantingly, as "images of the floating world.") A new exhibition at the Japan Society (333 East 47th Street; through June 4) presents seventy flawless examples—a telescoped history of the medium—from one of the world's great collections, in the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden.

Kitagawa Utamaro's "House Cleaning in the Palace," a four-foot-long tour de force, shows three samurai stumbling back after a night of drinking while the maids at home are tidying up; as an instance of perfectly composed chaos, the swirling, antic composition rivals anything in Poussin. Geishas and Kabuki actors were staples of ukiyo-e until the anti-luxury laws of 1842 prohibited depictions of such shocking immorality and, worse, limited the printmakers to seven colors. But Utagawa Kuniyoshi, in his feathery-fine portrait of a lady before the temple of Asakusa, proved that seven blocks were quite enough, thank you.

BOUCHERON

PARFUMS
PARIS



More than a perfume, a jewel.

BLOOMINGDALE'S • SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Portraits of George Sand, Delacroix, Baudelaire, Berlioz, and a very young Sarah Bernhardt are among those on view in an exhibition of works by the master photographer Nadar (Félix Tournachon, 1820-1910). Through July 9. . . . ¶ "The Seven Deadly Sins," a suite of paintings by Paul Cadmus, is at the center of a small show of his works (another of which is "The Eighth Sin: Jealousy"). . . . ¶ "An Egyptian Bestiary," a large non-petting zoo of falcons, baboons, hippos, and ibis, in stone, ivory, gold, bronze, and wood. . . . ¶ The Costume Institute has come up with a fresh take on the traditional spring flower show: in "Bloom: Fashion's Spring Gardens," one wanders among stands of gowns, blouses, and waistcoats adorned with tropical exotica, blue-blood roses, black *fleurs du mal*, and a host of other flora. . . . ¶ "R. B. Kitaj," a retrospective of more than seventy paintings by the American expatriate who for nearly four decades has lived and worked in London. Through May 14. . . . ¶ "The Architecture of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1870-1995," a hundred renderings, sketches, and working drawings. . . . ¶ Five large architectural models (scale: one inch = one foot) detail the phases in the current renovation of the Greek and Roman galleries. Also on view are recent acquisitions and newly restored works. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of video installations, sculptural objects, walk-in environments, and sound pieces by Bruce Nauman. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Helen Chadwick: Bad Blooms," another variation on the spring flower show—large, round photographs of flowers suspended in different substances (dandelions in hair gel, narcissi in bath bubbles, bluebells in oil and milk). Through July 11. . . . ¶ Tom Friedman's deadpan sculptures are the subject of the current "projects" show. A self-portrait has been carved from a regular-sized aspirin tablet; other pieces incorporate bubble gum, spaghetti, and dust. Through May 18. . . . ¶ "American Sculptors in the 1960s: Selected Drawings from the Collection," a superb selection of works on paper, with an emphasis on American minimalism and post-minimalism. Many are working drawings, and the curators have also included some of the finished sculptures—by Sol LeWitt, Robert Smithson, and Carl Andre; Smithson's mirrored corner piece is especially beautiful. Through June 13. . . . ¶ "Max Beckmann Prints" includes lithographs, drypoints, and woodcuts from throughout the German Expressionist's career. Through May 9. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A Ross Bleckner retrospective treats us to liberal helpings of the painter's familiar stew of sublimity and kitsch—the work of a soul profoundly divided between the raptures of a mystic and the whimsies of an interior decorator. Much of it is sickly gorgeous; some of it betrays a deep spiritual longing. Through May 14. . . . ¶ A ten-year survey of the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres. This Cuban-born Neo-Conceptualist supplements his typically sparse or abstract imagery (stacks of paper, sometimes bearing cryptic messages; spills of hard candies and of bubble gum) with parenthetical subtitles that allude to AIDS, politics, and more personal themes. Through May 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—The 1995 Biennial exhibition. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; and Fridays, 11 to 9, with no admission charge after 6 and live music and performances in the lower gallery.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"The Pictographs of Adolph Gottlieb." By 1941, Gott-

lieb (1903-74) had had it with the prevailing American provincial realism and European geometric abstraction. The "Pictographs" series—gridded paintings with Native American, Freudian, Joycean, and other imagery, in free-associative compositions—began the evolution of his style toward maturity. Sixty works are on view, supplemented by objects from the museum's tribal-art holdings, many of which were part of the artist's own collection. . . . ¶ The museum has impressively reinstalled its African holdings. The art works and artifacts span a millennium and encompass scores of cultures. Much is beautiful, and much is familiar, but it's the weirder stuff that really catches the eye—for example, a gilt "linguist staff" from Ghana. Linguists were high-ranking advisers to the king of the Fante tribe, and they carried such staffs in royal processions. This one is surmounted by figures that illustrate the Fante proverb "It is only a foolish mouse that tries to get into the cat's bag." Words to live by. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Beach parties, cocktails, airplanes, and modern-art patterns, in an array of colors and textures, are the stars of "Kitsch to Corbusier: Wallpaper from the 1950s." . . . ¶ Books, catalogues, signs, and stationery, mostly from the fifties and sixties, by the graphic designer Elaine Lustig Cohen. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "The Structure of Style: Dutch Modernism in the Applied Arts 1880-1930." . . . ¶ A display of jewelry and accessories from the museum's collection, including Egyptian mummy beads and gold snuffboxes. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—"Romantics, Neoclassicists, Realists: European Drawings from the Stanford University Museum of Art" includes works from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Fragonard, Turner, Delacroix, Fuseli, and others. Through May 14. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 10 to 6.)

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St.—"Gems of the Floating World," a large show of seldom displayed ukiyo-e prints from the Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden. Through June 4. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumina-

tion, 1450-1550" demonstrates that Renaissance artists expressed themselves just as exuberantly in illuminated manuscripts as they did in panel painting and sculpture. Every item on display is superb. A map of Italy in Ptolemy's "Geography" has the coloristic bravado of an Ellsworth Kelly; the massive choir books from Milan, Lodi, and Cesena have the impressive heft of a Richard Serra. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Animals as Symbol in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts." (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

MUSEUM FOR AFRICAN ART, 593 Broadway—Antelope, leopards, hyenas, snakes, chameleons, buffalo, pangolins, and warthogs—they can all be seen in "Animals in African Art: From the Familiar to the Marvelous." (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN, Fifth Ave., at 89th St.—"Nature Observed, Nature Interpreted," nineteenth-century landscape drawings, watercolors, and oils by seventeen American artists, including Church, Cole, Homer, and Vedder. Through June 13. . . . ¶ "Masterpieces of Nineteenth-Century Italian Painting," works by Giuseppe de Nittis, Guglielmo Ciardi, Giovanni Fattori, and others, from the Gaetano Marzotto collection. Through June 11. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

JOSEF ALBERS (1888-1976)—Paintings and rare works on paper from his "Homage to the Square" series. Through June 2. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

MARCEL BROODTHAERS (1924-76)—Delicate, witty, and dryly poetic, these works on paper—drawings and collages—provide a superb introduction to the eccentric, hard-to-place Belgian artist/poet's themes, which include imaginary museums, classification systems, and his signature. Through May 6. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays.)

ARSHILE GORKY (1904-48)—Thirty-nine drawings from the early thirties that show his developing abstract vocabulary. Through May



Self-portrait by Lorraine Shemesh (Stone).

26. (Mazoh, 67 E. 93rd St. Open Mondays, closed Saturdays.)

DUANE HANSON—A fat cleaning lady, a Ken-doll cop, a retired couple in Bermuda shorts, their cellulite rippling: the surrealist sculptor's chronicle of American tackiness marches onward and downward. Hanson's style hasn't deviated a hair (literally) since day one, but he is amazingly good at what he does. When the air-conditioning rustles the magazine that a flea-market dealer is holding, you experience a frisson not quite like any other. Through May 6. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

ALFREDO JAAR—An installation on the subject of Rwanda comprises rows, stacks, and grids of sealed black archival-photograph boxes, each of which contains an 8 x 10 photo taken in that country. A description of the picture is silk-screened onto the front of each box. Through June 17. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

RAY JOHNSON (1927-95)—A memorial exhibition for the artist, who committed suicide in January: many of his collages (including early, proto-Pop examples), documentations of Conceptual performances (which he called "nothings"), and pieces of "mail art"—thousands of business envelopes containing collages and photocopies related in cryptic ways to their recipients and meant to be added to and sent on to someone else or returned to the artist. Through June 16. (Feigen, 49 E. 68th St.)

KEITH MILOW—Pseudo-inspirational monuments, by a British sculptor, in fibreglass coated with a patina of rust and engraved with the names of twentieth-century artists. They suggest a frieze on a university library that touts Giacometti and Gilbert & George instead of Sophocles and Shakespeare. Through May 13. (Haime, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

BRUCE ROBBINS—Paintings in which neat, dark rectangles of heavy oil and encaustic are juxtaposed with fields of white incised with marks that look like the frantic scrabbling of a cursed creature imprisoned on the other side of the picture plane. Through May 20. (Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St.)

PETER PAUL RUBENS (1577-1640)—Small and medium-sized paintings and oil sketches: portraits, allegorical scenes, and religious subjects, all of superlative quality. The most extraordinary work is a fragment from a large painting: a small portrait of Vincenzo II Gonzaga, son of the Duke of Mantua, it demonstrates Rubens' famous *sprezzatura*—the frothy, fluid, yet precisely controlled brushstroke that was his trademark. The complete painting depicted the family at prayer, and the boy's eyes are looking heavenward, but his full, slightly pouting lips betray the first hints of aristocratic sensuality. Through May 19. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

LORRAINE SHEMAH—Seven- and eight-foot-long paintings of pool swimmers, by an artist who has a strong facility for rendering refracted light and underwater perspective. Through May 27. (Stone, 113 E. 90th St.)

ANDY WARHOL (1930-87)—Paintings, drawings, and silkscreens of nudes. Through June 16. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. . . .) Another show of selected works is at O'Hara, 41 E. 57th St., through June 3. Open Mondays.)

PICASSO—Three exhibitions provide a feast for the Picassophile. At Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.: "Picasso and Drawing," a hundred and twenty-five works on paper and on canvas, arranged chronologically from 1898 to 1970. Most of the works are from American and European private collections. Through June 2. . . . At Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.: Eight oil paintings and four large works on paper made in his Rue des Grands-Augustins studio, in Paris, between 1939 and 1947. Through June 24. . . . At Krugier, 41 E. 57th St.: "Sketchbooks 1900-1905," including studies for "The Absinthe Drinker" as well as children playing and dance-hall girls, along with large individual drawings from the same period. Through June 17.

SHORT LIST—BURGOYNE DILLER and CHARLES SELIGER, Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. Through June 3. . . .

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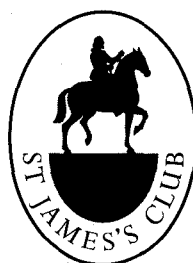
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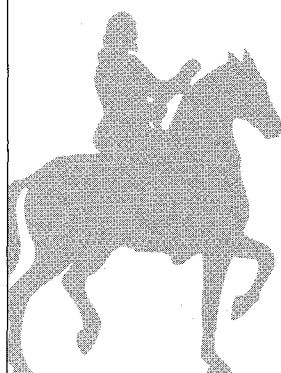
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CHARLES GARABEDIAN, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. Through June 9. ... **ROBERT MOTH-ERWELL**, Long, 24 W. 57th St. Through June 3. ... **JOHN NEWMAN**, McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays; through June 3. ... **TIMOTHY WOODMAN**, Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through June 3.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

MATTHEW BARNEY—The twenty-seven-year-old Barney, whose works mingle robust athleticism, polymorphous sexuality, and a keen appreciation of fashion, is one of the few indisputable art stars of the nineties (so far). Although this installation is a technical feat—it reproduces, in miniature, one of the grandest sets from the artist's new video work, "CREMASTER 4"—it's mainly a teaser for the forty-two-minute production, which is screened at the Public Theatre on Thursdays at 4 and on Saturdays and Sundays at 1:30 and 3. For reservations, call 431-5794. Through May 6. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

SCOTT BURTON (1939-89) / **JOYCE PENSATO**—Sandstone benches, steel chairs, a two-granite divan, and other laconic sculptures designed between 1986 and 1989. / Monstrous, nightmare versions of Disney characters, in paintings, drawings, and wall drawings. Through May 20. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

ROSALYN JACOBS—Colorful, thickly textured landscapes of the French countryside. Through May 27. (Synchronicity Space, 55 Mercer St.)

SEAN LANDERS—Call it "Return to the Planet of the Apes." Landers, one of the trailblazers in the "pathetic" (or "loser") art movement, here underscores the similarities between the raucous activities of chimpanzees and his own as an artist. The show includes paintings emblazoned with Landers' characteristic rambling and funny monologues; an unfired clay sculpture of a simian couple; and a video of a chimp cavorting in the artist's studio. Through May 20. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

JOHN LINDELL—A dryly conceptual but surprisingly funny installation concerning the dynamics of gay desire and the mechanics of gay sex. Lindell's wall drawings look like something he found in an advanced math textbook, but what they represent, in schematic form, is wild orgies. Through May 6. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Open Wednesday evenings until 8:30.)

GARY SIMMONS—Five large paintings, plus a sculptural installation, "Sound Garden," which incorporates a parquet floor, a square planter full of white pansies, and four black speakers suspended from the ceiling. Through May 13. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. ... ¶ A show of ten cartoon-derived images on panels resembling traditional green and black chalkboards is at the Contemporary, 45 Greene St., through May 20.)

"SYNAESTHESIA"—The cyberpunks have landed: the Pop painter Ronnie Cutrone has curated an exhibit of art from the wild frontiers of the Internet. Ken Feingold's motorized puppet—a gleaming, metallic version of Howdy Doody on wheels, with a video camera in its head—is trapped in a corral of mirrors; the visitor, at an adjacent monitor showing the puppet's point of view, shuttles the little robot around the space by manipulating a joystick. The effect is truly spooky. Also included are dizzying Pop paintings by the Designers Republic and by John (Crash) Matos, macabre sculptures by H. R. Giger, and videos by virtual-reality pioneer Jaron Lanier and by self-styled glam-nerd Rob Roth. Over all, the show is a hoot, and it has all the sensory excitement—and intellectual depth—of the latest video game. Through May 7. (Anthony, 589 Broadway. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

SHORT LIST—**DICK BROOKS**, Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. Through May 20. ... **MARK DI SUVERO**, Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Through May 27. ... **ELKE KRISTUFEK**, 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. Through May 13. ... **OUATTARA**, 65 Thompson Street Gallery. Through June 10. ... **MEL PEKARSKY**, Einstein, 591 Broadway. Through May 26. ... **NAM JUNE PAIK**, Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. Through June 3. ...

RONA PONDICK, Freire, 130 Prince St. Through May 20. ... **ELAINE REICHEK**, Klein, 40 Wooster St. Through May 26. ... **KARA WALKER**, Wooster Gardens, 252 Lafayette St., at Prince St. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6; through May 6. ... **JOHN WATERS**, American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. Through May 20. ... **TERRY WINTERS**, Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway. Through May 20. ... **YUKINORI YANAGI**, Blum, 99 Wooster St. Through July 31.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEY'S—May 3: The conclusion of a sale of contemporary art from the collections of the IBM International Foundation and the Los Angeles dealer Betty Asher. ... ¶ May 8: The Stralem collection of Impressionist and early-modern paintings, including exceptional works by Picasso, Matisse, Vuillard, and Rouault. ... ¶ May 9: Impressionist and modern paintings from the collections of Parisian auctioneer Maurice Rheims, Mrs. John Barry Ryan, and the Perls Galleries (among others), including important pieces by Toulouse-Lautrec, Cézanne, and Monet. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

WILLIAM DOYLE GALLERIES—May 3 at 10: Estate jewelry. ... ¶ May 4 at 10: European and



Mahler's Eighth Symphony, at Carnegie Hall.

American paintings, strong in American Impressionists. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

INTERNATIONAL RARE POSTER AUCTION—Armenian Diocese, Second Ave. at 34th St. May 7 at 11 A.M. For information, call 787-4000.

ANTIQUES SHOWS—New York Armory Antiques Show. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. May 3-7. For information, call 472-1180.) ... ¶ Arts-and-Crafts-period furniture and decorative arts. (Metropolitan Antiques, 110 W. 19th St. 463-0200. May 5-7.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

TINA BARNEY—New, funny, sometimes caustic pictures of the artist's family, this time loosely centered on couples. Through May 31. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

JEFF WALL—Six large Cibachromes, mounted in light boxes, of elaborately staged tableaux. Through June 10. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

SHORT LIST—**SALLY GALL**, Saul, 560 Broadway. Through May 20. ... **BIRNEY JIMES**, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through May 20. ... **JEROME LIEBLING**, Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Through May 20. ... **INGE MORATH**, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through May 20. ... **HILMAR PABEL**, Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon; through May 24. ... **ROBERT RIGER**, Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through May 20. ... **MICHAEL SPANO**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through May 26. ... **JAMES WELLING**, American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. Through May 20. ... **BRETT WESTON**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through May 13.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

(The box-office number for *Alice Tully Hall* is 875-5050; for *Avery Fisher Hall*, 875-5030; and for *Carnegie Hall*, 247-7800.)

"THE MANHATTAN BOOK OF THE DEAD"—A new multimedia opera by David First, starring baritone Thomas Buckner. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. May 4-6 at 7:30 and May 7 at 3:30.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK—Presenting a concert version of Bellini's "I Puritani," with soprano Mariella Devia, tenor Gregory Kunde, and baritone Carlo Gueffi. Eve Queler conducts. (Carnegie Hall. May 8 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Zdenek Macal conducts Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" Overture and A-Major Piano Concerto (K. 488, with Alicia de Larrocha), Paul Schoenfield's "Klezmer Ronds" (featuring flutist Jeanne Baxtresser and tenor Alberto Mizrahi), and a suite from Strauss's "Der Rosenkavalier." (Avery Fisher Hall. May 3-4 and May 6 at 8; May 5 at 11 A.M.; and May 9 at 7:30.)

MAHLER'S EIGHTH—"It is the biggest thing I have done so far," Mahler wrote in 1906, upon completing his Symphony No. 8. "Imagine the whole universe beginning to vibrate and resound. These are no longer human voices, but planets and suns revolving." Actually, those were human voices the audience heard at the premiere, four years later—nearly nine hundred of them, including seven solo singers, a boys' choir, and enormous mixed choruses—in addition to an immense orchestra with quadruple winds. The opening-night forces earned the work the nickname "Symphony of a Thousand," but it's usually rendered by considerably fewer musicians. This week's rare performances of Mahler's mega-masterpiece involve about seven hundred singers and instrumentalists; those who don't fit on the stage will occupy Carnegie Hall's first- and second-tier boxes. Robert Shaw conducts the Cleveland Orchestra and Chorus, the American Boychoir, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus, the Cincinnati May Festival Chorus, the Oberlin College Choir, and soloists Bridgett Hooks, Margaret Jane Wray, and Christine Goerke (sopranos), Janis Taylor and Marietta Simpson (mezzo-sopranos), Kim Begley (tenor), William Stone (baritone), and John Cheek (bass-baritone). (Carnegie Hall. May 4 at 7:30 and May 5 at 8.)

"NOSFERATU"—The Manhattan School of Music Chamber Symphony accompanies a screening of F. W. Murnau's 1922 vampire film, playing Hans Erdmann's original score. Gillian Anderson conducts. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 5 at 8. ... NOTE: At 7, the Arcata String Quartet will offer a pre-screening performance of Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" Quartet.)

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—Performing Arvo Pärt's "Fratres" (with violinist Gidon Kremer), Schnittke's Concerto Grosso No. 1 (with Mr. Kremer and violinist Tatyana Grindenko), and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. May 5-6 at 8. ... NOTE: Mr. Kremer and Ms. Grindenko will play music by Prokofiev, Schnittke, Victor Suslin, and Vladimir Martynov in pre-concert recitals, open to ticket holders, both nights at 7. On May 4 at 8, they will offer the same program at the Ukrainian Institute, 2 E. 9th St. 288-8660.)

ORCHESTRA OF ST. LUKE'S—Raymond Leppard conducts Hindemith's Concerto for Woodwinds,

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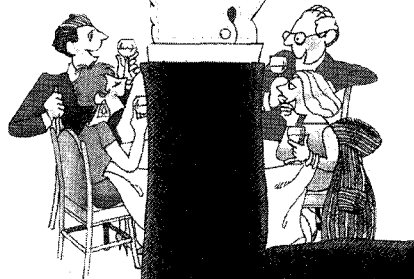
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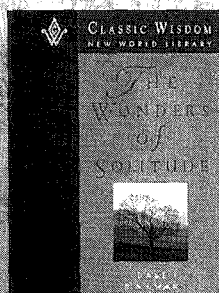
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MET ORCHESTRA—Out of the pit and onto the stage, performing Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite, Gershwin's "An American in Paris," Lowell Liebermann's Flute Concerto (featuring James Galway), and Mr. Galway's adaptation of Albert Franz Doppler's Andante and Rondo for Two Flutes (in which the Met Orchestra's principal flutist, Michael Parloff, will join Mr. Galway in the spotlight). James Levine conducts. (Carnegie Hall. May 7 at 3.)

RECITALS

IN THE ORGAN LOFTS—May 3 at 8: John Scott, the organist of St. Paul's, London, performs music by Franck, Duruflé, Dupré, and Jean Guillou. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520.) ... May 7 at 7:30: John Butt, University Organist at the University of California, Berkeley, plays works by Gibbons, Matthew Locke, John Blow, Purcell, and Bach (including his C-Major Toccata, Adagio, and Fugue). (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.) ... May 9 at 8: Kyler Brown offers Jacques-Nicolas Lemmens' Fanfare in D Major and Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 2 and D-Minor Prelude and Fugue; in addition, he'll employ electronic samples to supplement his pipe-organ interpretations of Marcel Dupré's "Cortège et Litanie," Eugène Gigout's "Grand Chœur Dialogue," and Liszt's arrangement of Bach's A-Minor Prelude and Fugue. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939.)

LISTENING BOOTH

VERDI: REQUIEM (Philips). John Eliot Gardiner leads a stunning period-instrument performance with an unusually broad dynamic range and compelling solo contributions by soprano Luba Orgonasova and mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter.

MENDELSSOHN: "ATHALIE" (Koch Schwann). Mendelssohn's 1845 incidental music for Racine's tragedy deserves to be known for far more than its "War March of the Priests." The choral movements are especially riveting in this production, led by Bernard Tetu at the 1993 Festival d'Ambronay.

KODÁLY: HÁRY JÁNOS SUITE, DANCES OF GALÁNTA, ETC. (London). This two-for-the-price-of-one set brings together almost all of Kodály's shimmering orchestral works, in mid-seventies mother-tongue readings by Antal Dorati and the resplendent Philharmonia Hungarica.

BARGEMUSIC—Pianist Anne-Marie McDermott plays Bach's C-Minor Partita, violinist Mark Peskanov joins her for Beethoven's C-Minor Sonata (Op. 30, No. 2), and cellist Ronald Thomas completes the ensemble for Dvořák's F-Minor Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 4 at 7:30 and May 7 at 4.)

HÉLÈNE GRIMAUD—Pianist, performing Beethoven's E-Major Sonata (Op. 109) and Brahms' four late sets of piano pieces. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 6 at 8.)

MIDORI—The violinist offers sonatas by Bartók (his First) and Brahms (his Second), as well as works by Schnittke, Szymanowski, and Saint-Saëns; with pianist Robert McDonald. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 7 at 3.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—Presenting the première of Wynton Marsalis's "(At the) Octoroon Balls" for String Quartet (featuring the Orion String Quartet), Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat," music by Ravel and Gershwin, and improvisations by Mr. Marsalis (playing trumpet) and pianist

Marcus Roberts. (Alice Tully Hall. May 7 at 5 and May 9 at 7:30.)

RUTH LAREDO—Every May, the St. Paul's Chapel noon concert series offers a Brahms concert to thank the anonymous donor who, for the past eighteen years, has underwritten the series with a large check, requesting only that the performances be offered "To the glory of God and in honor of Johannes Brahms." In this year's Brahms event, the pianist performs a selection of the composer's intermezzos and waltzes, his G-Minor Rhapsody, and some brief pieces by Brahms' friend and mentor, Schumann. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. May 8 at noon. Admission by contribution.)

THOMAS DEMENGA—The cellist performs works by Beethoven, Webern, Schnittke, and Heinz Holliger, as well as the première of Elliott Carter's "Figment"; with pianist Paul Coker. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 8 at 8.)

ALSO OF INTEREST

RIVERSIDE SYMPHONY: With violinist Chee-Yun. (Alice Tully Hall. May 3 at 8.) ... **EX UMBRIS**: The early-music ensemble performs medieval works about animals. (Church of the Resurrection, 115 E. 74th St. May 3 at 8. For information about tickets, call 567-3529.) ...

POMERIUM: Choral music by Dufay, Josquin, Monteverdi, and Gesualdo. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347. May 4 at 6:15.) ... **AMATO OPERA COMPANY**: "The Marriage of Figaro," in English. (319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May 6 at 2:30 and 7:30 and May 7 at 2:30.) ...

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC CHAMBER SINFONIA: Paul Zukofsky conducts Stravinsky's "Agon," Haydn's Symphony No. 95, Feldman's "Madame Press Died Last Week at Ninety," and Schoenberg's "Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene." (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. May 6 at 8. No tickets necessary.) ... **FLORENCE QUIVAR**: The mezzo-soprano performs songs by Respighi, Brahms, Zemlinsky, Mahler, and Berg; with pianist Armen Guezulimian. (Alice Tully Hall. May 7 at 2.) ...

CANTATA SINGERS: Bach's B-Minor Mass. (Christ & St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. May 7 at 2. Tickets at the door.) ... **PENDECKI STRING QUARTET**. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. May 7 at 2:45.) ... **BRIDGEHAMPTON CHAMBER MUSIC**: Works by J. C. Bach, Martini, and Fauré. (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. 750-5776. May 7 at 5 and May 8 at 7:30.) ...

PITNEY SHIN: Cellist, performing George Crumb's Unaccompanied Sonata and (with pianist Ilan Rechtman) sonatas by Brahms and Debussy. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. May 7 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.) ...

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ PHILHARMONIC: Playing Dvořák, Martinů, and Beethoven (his Symphony No. 3, with minor rescoring by Mahler); Peter Tiboris conducting. (Carnegie Hall. May 7 at 8:30.) ...

JUPITER SYMPHONY: Anton Kuerti is featured in Mozart's B-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 450) and his own Concertino (for flute, violin, and piano). (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. May 8 at 2 and 7 and May 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.) ...

S.E.M. ENSEMBLE: Performing Feldman's "For Philip Guston." (Paula Cooper Gallery, 155 Wooster St. May 9 from 7 to midnight. For information about tickets, call 1-718 488-7659.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

CULTURE SHOCK—On May 4, novelist Wang Meng will talk about recent trends in Chinese literature. Wang Meng's tenure as his country's minister of culture ended abruptly in 1989, in the aftermath of the student uprising at Tiananmen Square. It was not his first brush with controversy. In 1956, during a brief period of leniency, he wrote "The Young Newcomer in the Organization Department," a novel about an idealist's gradual disillusionment with Party bureau-

cracy. As a result of the backlash, he spent much of the next twenty years in Xinjiang Province, on the edge of the Gobi Desert. He continued to write during his exile, and in the late seventies, as the Cultural Revolution waned, he returned to Beijing as a leading voice in the experimental movement that came to be known as scar literature. This discussion (which will be translated by Columbia professor David D. Wang) is the first in a three-part series called "New Directions in Chinese Culture." (China Institute, 125 E. 65th St. 744-8181. May 4 at 6.)

"THE GREAT SAUNTER"—The Shorewalkers circle Manhattan on May 6, starting at 7 A.M. at the corner of Fulton and Water Streets, near South Street Seaport. The clockwise course covers all thirty-two miles of the island's perimeter, and people are free to join the tour or scramble away at any point. The steady pace will bring the loose affiliation to Inwood Park by 1:30 for a halfway lunch and back to South Street Seaport by 8:30 for a celebration. To register, call 330-7686.

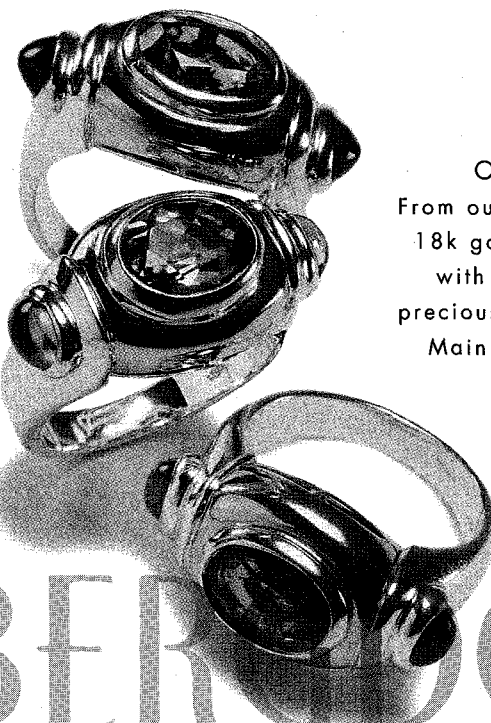
READINGS—May 3 at 7: For the New York Academy of Medicine's "Clinical Readings" series, novelist William Styron reads from "Darkness Visible: A Memoir of Madness," his account of depression and recovery. (Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. For more information, call 876-8200, ext. 272.) ... ¶ May 8 at 8: Kurt Brungardt, author of and cover model for "The Complete Book of Abs" and its sequel, "The Complete Book of Butt and Legs," reads from his work and demonstrates his upper- and lower-body workouts. (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) ... ¶ May 9 at 6:30: Sherman Alexie, a member of the Spokane tribe, reads from his first novel, "Reservation Blues." (Rizzoli, 454 West Broadway. No tickets necessary.) ... ¶ May 9 at 7:30: Rita Dove, poet laureate of the United States, reads from "Mother Love," her recent collection. (Barnes & Noble, Sixth Ave. at 21st St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS—May 4 at 6:30: Edgar Munhall, a curator of the Frick Collection, traces the correspondence between painter James Abbott McNeill Whistler ("Dear Butterfly") and poet Robert de Montesquiou ("Bat! Dear Bat!") and discusses Whistler's portrait of the poet, which hangs in the Frick. (French Institute—Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. 355-6100. Tickets at the door on the evening of the talk.) ... ¶ May 6 at 1: Helen Hiebert, of the Dieu Donné Papermill, presents handcrafted paper, then helps workshop participants make their own. (Fraunces Tavern Museum, 54 Pearl St. 425-1778.) ... ¶ May 9 at 6:30: Beryl Bender Birch, author of "Power Yoga" and yogini in residence at the New York Road Runners Club, flexes for the literary crowd. (Barnes & Noble, Third Ave. at 54th St. No tickets necessary.)

TOUR—May 7, from noon to 5: the Clinton Hill Society provides maps for its open-house tour of the Brooklyn neighborhood's Victorian residences. For more information, call 1-718 852-9423.

SPORTS

SECOND SEASON—With Michael Jordan's return, the previously uneven Chicago Bulls are now contenders. But the Knicks' air of invincibility had vanished long before Jordan, in his fifth game back, scored fifty-five points against them. Charles Oakley hasn't been the same since his toe operation. And although John Starks set an N.B.A. season record for three-pointers his mercurial inside game has disappeared. Still, if Patrick Ewing keeps putting up M.V.P.-level numbers, the team shouldn't have too much trouble advancing to a second-round tooth-and-nail rematch against Reggie Miller's Pacers. The rosiest long-view scenario has the Knicks playing Jordan's Bulls or Shaq's Magic in the Eastern Conference finals. ... Stay tuned.



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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

EROTIQUE—Three vignettes—about a woman who works a phone-sex line, two lesbians in Hamburg out to pick up a man, and an estranged couple in Hong Kong—directed by Lizzie Borden, Monika Treut, and Clara Law, respectively. With Kamala Lopez-Dawson, Priscilla Barnes, and Marianne Sägbrecht. Opening May 5. (Village Theatre VII, Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

FRENCH KISS—Meg Ryan plays a schoolteacher who flies to Paris in pursuit of her wayward fiancé (Timothy Hutton) and there falls for a charming French thief (Kevin Kline), in a film directed by Lawrence Kasdan and written by Adam Brooks. Opening May 5. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

MY FAMILY—Jimmy Smits, Esai Morales, and Edward James Olmos in a family saga that spans seven decades, beginning with the patriarch's journey from a Mexican village to Los Angeles in the nineteen-twenties. Written (with Anna Thomas) and directed by Gregory Nava. Opening May 3. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

ONLY THE BRAVE—Set in the industrial outskirts of Melbourne Australian director Ana Kokinos's film is a portrait of a working-class girl (Elena Mandalis) torn between her best friend (Dora Kaskanis) and her teacher (Maude Davey). Written by Mira Robertson and the director. Shown with "Playing the Part," a forty-minute autobiographical film by Mitch McCabe, about how the filmmaker came out to her affluent Midwestern family. Opening May 5. (Cinema Village.)

PANTHER—Courtney B. Vance is Bobby Seale and Marcus Chong is Huey Newton in Mario Van Peebles' chronicle of the rise and fall of the Black Panther Party. With Kadeem Hardison, Joe Don Baker, and Dick Gregory. Screenplay by Melvin Van Peebles, from his novel. Opening May 3. (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in *The Current Cinema*, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 27.)

AMATEUR—In Hal Hartley's lively and very peculiar thriller, an amnesiac (Martin Donovan), an ex-nun (Isabelle Huppert), a porn star (Elina Lowensohn), and an accountant (Damian Young) are on the lam from a sinister European arms merchant. Hartley's Godardian manner is occasionally irritating, but Huppert's delicate, surprisingly witty performance keeps the picture grounded in recognizable human emotions.—T.R. (4/17/95) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

BAD BOYS—A potential money factory from the producers of the "Beverly Hills Cop" movies, starring Martin Lawrence and Will Smith as a pair of Miami detectives who have four days to prevent a huge heroin score. The casting is shrewd but nervous: Lawrence, known for his physical and often sexually explicit comedy, plays a timid and faithful husband, while polite, sweet-faced Smith plays an oversexed loose cannon. The car chases are unimpeachable. Directed by Michael Bay.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

THE BASKETBALL DIARIES—Leonardo DiCaprio plays a high-school-age Jim Carroll, a New York kid who wears a dirty grin, scoffs at his teachers, reduces his mother (Lorraine Bracco) to tears, and hangs out with a bunch of friends, looking for trouble; when they can't find it, they make it. Early on, the picture offers some fine, flowing scenes of the gang tearing down the street with all the zip and glee of Truffaut kids, and loping and shoving, angular and energetic, across the basketball court. But when Jim discovers heroin—and the film finds a sense of responsibility—the freedom disappears: the latter half becomes a grueling catalogue of cold nights, blue lips, and scummy needles. DiCaprio gives it everything he's got, but the picture doesn't ask



Nicolas Cage and David Caruso in "Kiss of Death."

him for much; it isn't interested in his good humor, let alone his good looks. Directed by Scott Kalvert, scripted by Bryan Goluboff, and based on Carroll's own chronicle of his wasted youth, it's all too pleased with itself for getting down into the gutter. The final sequence makes it plain that because Carroll now writes poetry he is cured, and redeemed. That's what he thinks, anyway.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center. . . .) Gotham Cinema; through May 4.)

KAREN CALDICOTT

BURNT BY THE SUN—Nikita Mikhalkov stars in a film that he wrote and directed. In Russian. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Eastside Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CRUMB—Terry Zwigoff's brilliant, scary documentary about the underground-comics artist R. Crumb. While the film is reviewing Crumb's career, from its psychedelic-era heyday to the present, and following him as he goes about his everyday activities, it's also telling a harrowing story about his damaged family. The hero of this picture is both a courageous resister and a shell-shocked casualty of his family's wars, and Zwigoff's portrait carefully preserves that ambiguity. The movie is often funny, but what makes it extraordinary is that it explores, without presuming to explain, the sources of a unique and savage comic sensibility. And it shows us that Crumb's gift—the detachment that allows him to create such hilariously contemptuous images of the world around him (and inside him)—is also a kind of curse, or, at least, a nasty habit. —T.R. (5/1/95) (Film Forum 3.)

THE CURE—A very effective tearjerker about the friendship between two boys (Brad Renfro and Joseph Mazzello), one of whom is dying of AIDS; it dwells heavily on the boys' search for a cure, but the hand-wringing is dispensed with early. While the movie is no "Shoeshine," it is beautifully acted, and the director, Peter Horton, comes across with simple and assured camera work, keeping the tearful closeups to a minimum. The schlocky music, by Dave Grusin, is a big mistake—it sentimentalizes a story that would stand up strong without it. —B.D. (59th Street East Cinema, East 85th Street, Art Greenwich Twin, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . Regency; through May 4.)

THE DAY THE SUN TURNED COLD—A gripping true-crime melodrama based on a 1988 incident in the blue-tinged frozen plains of northeastern China. Told in flashbacks, the story unfolds inexorably, like a harsh nineteenth-century novel. A young factory worker asks the police to look into the possibility that his father's death ten years earlier was caused by something his mother sprinkled in the soup. The vindictive son's motives are never satisfactorily laid out, and the other men remain mostly ciphers; as in "Madame Bovary," it is the woman—in this case, a frumpy, uneducated seller of bean curd, beautifully and enigmatically played by Siqin Gowa—that you remember. Written and directed by Yim Ho. In Mandarin. —S.K. (Quad Cinema.)

DON JUAN DeMARCO—A young man in a mask (Johnny Depp), who calls himself Don Juan and has been seducing every woman in sight, is put under the care of a psychiatrist (Marlon Brando); the doctor tries at first to cure the youth of his illusion and then begins to wonder whether there might be something to it. The writer and director, Jeremy Leven—himself a former shrink—has taken a heavy conceit and lightened it into comedy, which is what it deserves. Brando enjoys himself hugely, especially in his scenes with Faye Dunaway, who plays his wife. In defiance of the laws of gravity, the big man rises to the occasion and lifts the movie with him. —A.L. (4/10/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, and Lincoln Square.)

FRIDAY—Ice Cube stars in a comedy he co-wrote (with D. J. Pooh) about life in South Central Los Angeles. With Chris Tucker. Directed by Gary Gray. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

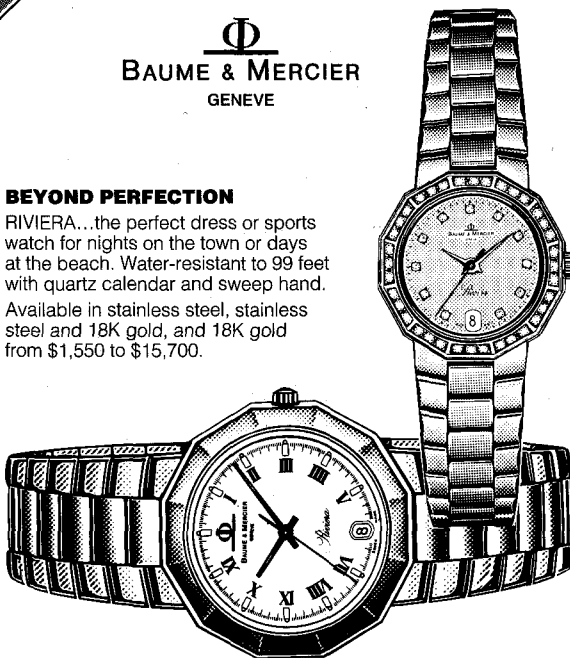
KISS OF DEATH—Barbet Schroeder's workmanlike remake of the 1947 crime melodrama, about the perils of a small-time New York crook who becomes a stool pigeon, demonstrates that gritty urban realism isn't what it used to be. Despite a wonderful cast—which includes David Caruso (as the sensitive squealer), Helen Hunt, Samuel L. Jack-

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son, and Stanley Tucci—and a crafty, low-key screenplay by Richard Price, the picture feels a little lethargic. Only Nicolas Cage manages to dispel the overall air of weary professionalism. He plays the chief villain, a positive-thinking, bodybuilding thug named Little Junior, as a kind of murderous innocent. It's an original, alarmingly funny performance, and it's just what this picture needs. Also with Kathryn Erbe, Michael Rapaport, and Ving Rhames.—T.R. (5/1/95) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

MOVING THE MOUNTAIN—Michael Apted's documentary about China's democracy movement is lucid, intelligent, and, like every good movie about politics, almost unendurably sad. At its center is the 1989 face-off in Tiananmen Square between idealistic student demonstrators and the hard-line Communist government. The dissenters, who thought they had the old-timers on the run, instead wound up running for their own lives. The story of the demonstrations and the final massacre is told with archival footage inflected, heartbreakingly, by the memories of the movement's leaders—exiles who live with the knowledge that their words and their tactics resulted in the deaths of many of their followers. The movie vividly depicts the emotional cost of battling oppression. You see in these young faces the effects of an exhausting struggle between hope and bottomless regret. In English and Mandarin.—T.R. (Film Forum 1; through May 9.)

PICTURE BRIDE—A nice-looking, earnest feminist lesson, about a young Japanese woman (Youki Kudoh) who enters into an arranged marriage with a sugarcane cutter (Akira Takayama) in Hawaii. The picture examines the role of the Japanese contract laborers in the early part of the century and the limited choices available to the women who joined them; to whip these elements into a story, the director, Kayo Hatta, and her co-writer (and sister), Mari Hatta, added some Hawaiian folklore and a little Magic Realism. Not surprisingly, the characters (including a country bride and a city bride, a bitter Portuguese intermediary, and an aloof but kind plantation wife) are stereotyped composites of sociohistorical forces. Even as history, though, this film fails to answer the most basic question: what was it like to bend over all day in a hot field cutting sugarcane? In Japanese and English.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and 68th St. Playhouse.)

A PYROMANIAC'S LOVE STORY—A curiously flat stab at a contemporary fairy tale. John Leguizamo is an apprentice baker in love with a tomboy waitress (Sadie Frost); Armin Mueller-Stahl is his boss, a man too proud to tell his wife (Joan Plowright) that they're broke. When a zany rich boy (William Baldwin) burns the bakery down, nearly everyone confesses, for reasons of love, to the arson. But because the men are devoted to the women from the start, we miss what is typically the fun and drama of romantic comedy: besotted couples failing to recognize what's happening to them. Besides, the young people, who walk and talk like slackers, lack the wit the form requires; only Mueller-Stahl and Plowright, the old pros, have the courage and the technique to be adorable. Directed by Joshua Brand (the co-creator of "Northern Exposure"); written by Morgan Ward.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

ROB ROY—Michael Caton-Jones's film about the eighteenth-century Scottish outlaw Robert MacGregor uneasily straddles the line between swashbuckler and prestige picture. In Alan Sharp's screenplay, Rob (Liam Neeson) is a rugged, principled man at war with artful English fops (Tim Roth and John Hurt). This should make for rousing spectacle, but somehow it doesn't. With Jessica Lange as



Leonardo DiCaprio in "The Basketball Diaries."

the hero's loyal wife, the picture is actually more effective as a conjugal-love story than as a ripping yarn.—T.R. (4/17/95) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, Lincoln Square, and Metro Cinema.)

SEARCH AND DESTROY—This vibrantly colored film by the painter David Salle, about the dirty doings of a would-be Hollywood producer, has surprising snap. Dennis Hopper plays the author of an "Iron John"-like best-seller, and Griffin Dunne turns in a rare good performance as a lost soul willing to do whatever it takes to purchase the rights; his determination leads to drug deals and, eventually, murder. John Turturro, Christopher Walken, and, especially, Ileana Douglas are strikingly crazy as characters who get involved in his scheme. After a while, the desperation of all these people becomes quite moving. Michael Almereyda's hip

script, based on Howard Korder's play, isn't all it should be; the ending seems Taran-tinized, but it's impressive.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center and Angelika 57.)

SWIMMING WITH SHARKS—When Kevin Spacey, as a movie producer from hell, tells an abused assistant to fetch, he oozes the sweet smell of success; his performance is a triumph of nastiness on a par with his decadent work as Mel Profit in the old "Wise-guy" television series. But when his new assistant (Frank Whaley) decides to fight back and torture his boss, Spacey's character loses his fizz, and the movie becomes a revenge fantasy smothered by a colorless, driven twerp. Written and directed by George Huang.—B.D. (Village Theatre VII and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

THE UNDERNEATH—Steven Soderbergh directs a remake of Robert Siodmak's 1949 film noir "Criss Cross," in which a long-absent son (Peter Gallagher) returns to Austin to attend his mother's wedding, hook up with his ex-wife (Alison Elliott), and commit a robbery. (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, and Lincoln Square.)

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING—A romantic comedy with Sandra Bullock and Bill Pullman. Directed by Jon Turteltaub. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

WINGS OF COURAGE—Shriek as a light airplane flies out of the screen and clips you on the nose! Thrill to giant landscapes that unroll before your eyes! Sleep as the plot gets really boring! The first feature film to be made in Imax 3-D has to be watched through a special headset (satisfyingly chunky) and lasts forty minutes (gratifyingly short). Craig Sheffer plays a pilot in 1930 hired to fly mail across the Andes; he tries, fails, tries again, crashes, then walks the rest of the way, while his wife (Elizabeth McGovern) sits at home feeling worried. The flying scenes are big and bombastic, and the sound quality makes you feel as though a small chamber orchestra were sitting on top of your head. But instead of rethinking the shape of the drama to suit the format, the director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, has taken a small, simplistic plot, filled a couple of lonely roles with flat performers, and marooned them in the midst of a spectacle that is not so much a movie as a demonstration. With Val Kilmer and Tom Hulce.—A.L. (4/21/95) (Lincoln Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

APARAJITO: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . **BAR GIRLS**: Quad Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinema. . . **BOYS ON THE SIDE**: Worldwide Cinemas. . . **BULLETS OVER BROADWAY** (reviewed in our issue of 10/24/94): Art Greenwich Twin. . . **CIRCLE OF FRIENDS**: 19th Street East 6, Coronet, Waverly, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . **DESTINY TURNS ON THE RADIO**: Village Theatre VII, Baronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center. . . **DOLORES CLAIBORNE** (4/3/95): First & 62nd Cinemas and Chelsea Cinemas. . . **DUMB AND DUMBER**: Worldwide Cinemas. . . **EXOTICA**: Angelika Film Center, 57th St. Playhouse, and Embassy. . . **FARINELLI**: Village East Cinemas and Lincoln Square. . . **A GOOFY MOVIE**: Village East Cinemas, Sutton, East 85th Street, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Embassy. . . **HEAVENLY CREATURES** (11/21/94): Worldwide Cinemas. . . **HOOP DREAMS** (10/17/94): Plaza and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . **I.Q.** (12/26/94-1/2/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . **JEFFERSON IN PARIS**: Paris. . . **JURY DUTY**: 84th Street Sixplex. . . **LEGENDS OF THE FALL** (1/9/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . **LITTLE WOMEN** (1/9/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . **LOSING ISAIAH**: Embassy. . . **THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE** (1/16/95): Cinema 3 and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . **MURIEL'S WEDDING**: Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . **NEW JERSEY DRIVE**: Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Six-

plex. . . . **ONCE WERE WARRIORS:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **OUTBREAK (3/20/95):** Village Theatre VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . **PATHER PANCHALI:** 62nd & Broadway. . . . **PRIEST (3/27/95):** Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square. . . . **PULP FICTION (10/10/94):** Manhattan Twin and Embassy. . . . **RED FIRECRACKER, GREEN FIRECRACKER:** Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **STRAWBERRY AND CHOCOLATE:** Sutton. . . . **TANK GIRL:** Movieland 8th Street Triplex. . . . **TOMMY BOY:** 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **TOP DOG:** Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . **TRUE BELIEVERS:** Cinema Village. . . . **VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED:** 34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.

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VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
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PLAZA, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
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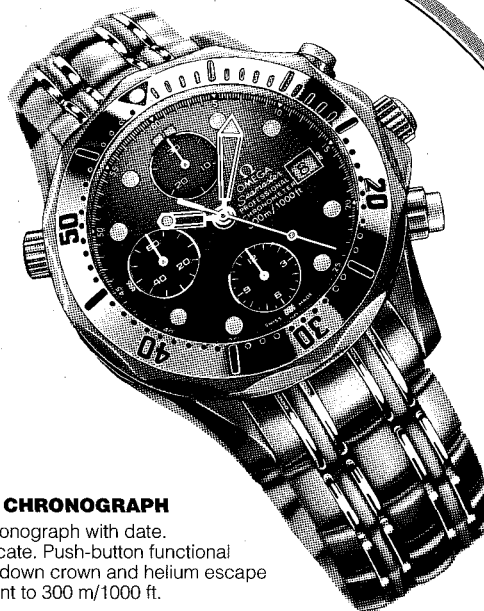
WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
WAYERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
GUILD, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St., between 8th and 9th Aves. (504-0960).
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
PARIS, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
REGENCY, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
LINCOLN SQUARE, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

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REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

FAHRENHEIT 451 (1966)—Ray Bradbury's story about a future society in which books are forbidden was filmed in England by François Truffaut, with Julie Christie and Oskar Werner. The idea has an almost irresistible appeal, but Truffaut doesn't exploit the obvious possibilities. He barely dramatizes the material at all, and though there are charming, childlike moments, the performers seem listless, and the whole enterprise is a little drab.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; May 6-9.)

FLYING LEATHERNECKS (1951)—Marine flyboys provide close air support to our Pacific-based fighting men in an adventure that is replete with Second World War-movie clichés—the central squadron is a social cross-section—even though it was made half a decade after the war ended. The director, Nicholas Ray, provides lots of rugged aerial combat while coaxing an alert performance out of John Wayne (as an officer whose stern sagacity verges on the cruel) and a subtle one out of Robert Ryan (as Wayne's too humane No. 2 man). When they square off verbally, you know what it means to talk marine to marine. And Ryan's oscillations and Wayne's emotion-deflecting armor add some ambiguity to their characters. With Jay C. Flippen as an amiable scrounger. James Edward Grant wrote the script, from a story by Kenneth Gamet.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 6.)

THE LUSTY MEN (1952)—This movie beautifully captures the excitement and tawdriness of the rodeo circuit despite a thin, self-defeating story. Robert Mitchum stars as a beat-up ex-champ who coaches a talented rookie (Arthur Kennedy) and falls in love with the man's wife (Susan Hayward). At times the picture resembles a "Golden Boy"-style boxing drama, with the rodeo as the place poor cowpokes go to make a killing and instead get killed or corrupted. Fortunately, the director, Nicholas Ray, doesn't moralize too heavily. The audience gets caught up in the competition, and Mitchum's earthy, casual

parable. Having experienced a debasing loneliness, Ryan goes through purification; Ida Lupino, as the blind sister of a mentally disturbed young murderer, is his angel of redemption. Script by A. I. Bezzerides and Ray, from the novel "Mad with Much Heart," by Gerald Butler.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 6.)

SMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT (1955)—Ingmar Bergman achieves one of the few classics of carnal comedy: a tragicomic chase and roundelay that raises boudoir farce to elegance and lyric poetry. In this fin-de-siècle houseparty setting, with its soft light, its delicate, perfumed atmosphere, and its golden pavilion, the women are all beautiful and epigrams shine. As the hostess, the stage actress trying to win back the lawyer she loves, there is the great Eva Dahlbeck. Ulla Jacobsson is the lawyer's virgin wife; Harriet Andersson, a blonde here but as opulent and sensuous as in her earlier roles, is the impudent, love-loving maid; Margit Carlquist is the proud, unhappy countess. Gunnar Björnstrand is the lawyer, Björn Bjelvenstam is his son, Jarl Kulle is the strutting count, and Naima Wifstrand is the actress's aged mother, who is carried about for her game of croquet. In Swedish.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; May 5.)

THE WORLD OF APU (1959)—Satyajit Ray's protagonist, Apu, whose consciousness developed from the village life of "Pathar Panchali" and the university in "Aparajito," marries the exquisite Sharmila Tagore and grows beyond self-consciousness. Rich and contemplative, and a great, convincing affirmation. The full-grown Apu is played by the remarkable Soumitra Chatterji, who starred in several other Ray films. In Bengali.—P.K. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; starting May 5.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—"Rebel Without a Cause" (1955, Nicholas Ray), with James Dean and Natalie Wood. **LITTLE THEATRE**, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)—May 3-4 at 6: "The Valley" (1972, Barbet Schroeder). . . . May 3-4 at 8:30 and 10:15: "Starting Place" (1993, Robert

at 6 and May 6 at 2: "Lumière d'Été" (1942, Jean Grémillon; in French). . . . May 5 at 6 and May 7 at 2:30: "Les Enfants" (1984, Duras; in French). . . . May 5 at 8: "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" (1959, Alain Resnais; in French). . . . May 5 at 8:15 and May 8 at 6: "Hôtel des Amériques" (1982, André Téchiné; in French). . . . May 6 at 2: "Agatha, ou les Lectures Illimitées" (1981, Duras; in French) and "L'Homme Atlantique" (1981, Duras; in French). . . . May 6 at 5: "Nathalie Granger" (1972, Duras; in French). . . . May 7 at 5: "Le Camion" (1977, Duras; in French). . . . May 7 at 5: "We Won't Grow Old Together" (1972, Maurice Pialat; in French). . . . May 8 at 2:30: "The Man Who Loved Women" (1977, François Truffaut; in French). . . . May 9 at 2:30: "Goupi Mains Rouges" (1942, Jacques Becker; in French). . . . May 9 at 6: "Alpha-ville" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A retrospective of Ingmar Bergman's films will be shown over the next six weeks, while the Museum of Television and Radio (see below) broadcasts his work for the small screen. May 5 at 2: "Smiles of a Summer Night" (†). . . . May 5 at 4:15: "Through a Glass Darkly" (1962). . . . May 5 at 6:15: "Wild Strawberries" (1957). . . . May 5 at 8:30: "Persona" (1966). . . . May 6-7 at 2: Three short films by Bergman, especially for children. . . . May 6 at 4: "Monika" (1953). . . . May 6 at 6: "Cries and Whispers" (1972). . . . May 6 at 8: "Fanny and Alexander" (1983). . . . May 7 at 4 and 8 and May 8 at 4 and 7:50: "Crisis" (1945). . . . May 7 at 6 and May 8 at 2, 6, and 9:45: "It Rains on Our Love" (1946). . . . May 9 at 2: "A Ship Bound for India" (1947). . . . May 9 at 4: "Night Is My Future" (1948).

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A retrospective of Ingmar Bergman's television work (through July 2), in conjunction with the Walter Reade's film retrospective (see above). Miniseries, filmed stage adaptations, and movies made for television, as well as documentaries about Bergman, are on the schedule. May 5 at 6: "Public Broadcasting Laboratory: Ingmar Bergman" (1968). . . . May 5 at 7:30: "The Ritual" (1969). . . . May 6 at 1: "Ingmar Bergman: The Magic Lantern" (1988). . . . May 6 at 2: "Scenes from a Marriage," Episodes 1-3 (1973). . . . May 7 at 1: "Ingmar Bergman: The Director" (1988). . . . May 7 at 2: "Scenes from a Marriage," Episodes 4-6. . . . May 9 at 2: "Madame de Sade" (1992).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Nicholas Ray. May 6 at 2: "On Dangerous Ground" (†). . . . May 6 at 4: "Flying Leathernecks" (†). . . . May 7 at 2: "The Lusty Men" (†). . . . May 7 at 4:30: "Party Girl" (1958).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Saturday-and-Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On May 6 at 7, the feature will be "The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe" (1991, John Bailey), with Lily Tomlin. On May 7 at 7, the feature will be "Pink Narcissus" (1971), with Bobby Kendall.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 9 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Male Hunt" (1964, Edouard Molinaro; in French), with Jean-Paul Belmondo.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—May 5 at 8: "The Three Panelled Mirror" (1927, Jean Epstein) and "Une Simple Histoire" (1958, Marcel Hainoun). . . . May 5 at 10: "Film Portrait" (1971, Jerome Hill). . . . May 6 at 4: "Ivan the Terrible," Parts I and II (1944-46, Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian). . . . May 6-9 at 8: "Fahrenheit 451" (†). . . . May 7 at 5: Three short films by Luis Buñuel and others. . . . May 7 at 7: "Serene Velocity" (1970, Ernie Gehr) and "Still" (1971, Gehr). . . . May 7 at 9: "L'Age d'Or" (1930, Buñuel and Salvador Dalí; in French).



Michelle Forbes, Kevin Spacey, and Frank Whaley in "Swimming with Sharks."

authority carries some threadbare scenes. Cinematography by Lee Garmes; editing by Ralph Dawson; script by Horace McCoy and David Dortort.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; May 7.)

ON DANGEROUS GROUND (1951)—The first half contains sensational urban-cop stuff, and Robert Ryan is great—eruptively expressive—as a police detective pushed to brutality, and almost to breakdown, by the hostility of crooks and citizens alike. Nicholas Ray shoots and cuts with offhand incisiveness, as if his camera were keyed to his cop's febrile brain. But when Ryan's boss (Ed Begley) dispatches him to crack a killing in the boondocks in order to cool him off, the movie dissolves into a melodramatic

Kramer; in English and Vietnamese). . . . May 5 (for four weeks), a program titled "Crossroads: The North African and Middle East Film Festival."

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—May 4 at 2:30: "The Love of Jeanne Ney" (1927, G. W. Pabst). . . . May 4 at 3 and 6: "Salvaged Lives" (1994, Barbara Liebovitz), a documentary. . . . May 4 at 6:30 and May 6 at 5: "There Were Days . . . and Moons" (1990, Claude Lelouch; in French). . . . May 5 at 2:30 and May 7 at 2: "Juve vs. Fantômas" (1913, Louis Feuillade) and "The Crazy Ray" (1923, René Clair). . . . May 5 at 3: "The South Bank Show: Marguerite Duras" (1984), a documentary. . . . May 5



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The Museum of Television & Radio
212-621-6800

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212-870-1630

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212-560-3000

Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

Friday, May 5 - Thursday, May 11
Film Society of Lincoln Center

A Ship Bound for India
Cries and Whispers
Crisis
The Devil's Wanton
Fanny and Alexander
It Rains on Our Love
Night is My Future
Persona

Port of Call
Smiles of a Summer Night
Summer with Monika
Through a Glass Darkly
Wild Strawberries

The Museum of Television & Radio

Ingmar Bergman: The Director
Madame de Sade
The Magic Lantern
Public Broadcasting Lab: Ingmar Bergman
The Ritual
Scenes from a Marriage (complete version)

Friday, May 12 - Thursday, May 18
Film Society of Lincoln Center

A Lesson in Love
The Devil's Wanton
Dreams
Illicit Interlude
Port of Call
Sawdust and Tinsel
Secrets of Women
Summer with Monika
Three Strange Loves
To Joy

Friday, May 12 - Thursday, May 18
The Museum of Television & Radio

The Bacchae
Börlz, Bergman, and The Bacchae
The Blessed Ones
Ingmar Bergman Bids Farewell to Cinema
Ingmar Bergman: The Director
Madame de Sade
The Magic Lantern
Public Broadcasting Lab: Ingmar Bergman
Special screening with David Brenner
The Ritual
Scenes from a Marriage (complete version)

Friday, May 19 - Thursday, May 25
Film Society of Lincoln Center

Brink of Life
The Devil's Eye
The Magician
The Seventh Seal
Smiles of a Summer Night
Through a Glass Darkly
The Virgin Spring
Wild Strawberries

The Museum of Television & Radio

The Bacchae
The Bergman File
The Blessed Ones
Good Morning America/43rd Oscars
Ingmar Bergman Bids Farewell to Cinema
The Last Gasp (American Premiere)
The Open Mind: A Profile of Bergman
Scenes from a Marriage (complete version)

Friday, May 26 - Thursday, June 1
Film Society of Lincoln Center

All These Women
The Devil's Eye
Hour of the Wolf
Persona
Shame
The Silence
Through a Glass Darkly
Winter Light

The Museum of Television & Radio

After the Rehearsal
The Bergman File
The Blessed Ones
Good Morning America/43rd Oscars
Ingmar Bergman Bids Farewell to Cinema
The Last Gasp (American Premiere)
The Magic Flute
The Open Mind: A Profile of Bergman
Scenes from a Marriage (complete version)
The South Bank Show: Bergman at Sixty

Wednesday, May 31
BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

6:00 pm *Bergman Gala Celebration*
8:00 pm *The Winter's Tale*

Thursday, June 1
The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Ingmar Bergman & The Theatre
Exhibit Opens
BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden
8:00 pm *The Winter's Tale*

Friday, June 2 - Thursday, June 8
Film Society of Lincoln Center

Cries and Whispers
The Magic Flute
The Passion of Anna
The Ritual & Daniel
Scenes from a Marriage
The Touch

The Museum of Television & Radio

After the Rehearsal
Face to Face (complete version)
Fårö Document
Fårö 1979
The Magic Flute
Man Alive Presents Ingmar Bergman
The South Bank Show: Bergman at Sixty

Friday, June 2
BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

8:00 pm *The Winter's Tale*
11:00 pm *Post-Performance Discussion*

Saturday, June 3
American Museum of the Moving Image

2:00 pm *An Afternoon with Sven Nykvist*
4:30 pm *The Tenant (Polanski)*

BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

8:00 pm *The Winter's Tale*

Sunday, June 4
American Museum of the Moving Image

2:00 pm *Crimes and Misdemeanors (Woody Allen)*
4:30 pm *Unbearable Lightness of Being (Kaufman)*

Monday, June 5
The Role of a National Theater Panel
7:00 pm *The Juilliard School*

Wednesday, June 7
BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

7:00 pm *Madame de Sade*

Thursday, June 8
BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

8:00 pm *Madame de Sade*

Friday, June 9 - Thursday, June 15
Film Society of Lincoln Center

After the Rehearsal & Karin's Face
Autumn Sonata
Face to Face
Fanny and Alexander
Fårö Document '79
From the Life of Marionettes
Scenes from a Marriage
The Serpent's Egg

The Museum of Television & Radio

After the Rehearsal
A Play for Today: The Lie
CBS Playhouse 90: The Lie
The Dick Cavett Show: Ingmar Bergman
Face to Face (complete version)
Fårö Document
Fårö 1979

Ingmar Bergman: The Director
The Magic Lantern
Man Alive Presents Ingmar Bergman
The South Bank Show: Bergman at Sixty

The Museum of Modern Art - Alf Sjöberg Screenings

Barabbas
The Father
Flowering Time
Iris and the Lieutenant
The Island
Journey Out
Karin Månsdotter
Special screening with Sven Nykvist
Only a Mother
The Road to Heaven
They Staked Their Lives
Torment
Wild Birds

Friday, June 9
BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

8:00 pm *Madame de Sade*
10:30 pm *Post-Perf. Discussion*

Saturday, June 10
The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts Symposium

10:00 am-4:00 pm
BAM-Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden

8:00 pm *Madame de Sade*

Thirteen/WNET

Best Intentions
The Last Gasp

Friday, June 16 - Thursday, June 22
The Museum of Television & Radio

After the Rehearsal
A Play for Today: The Lie
The Bergman File
The Best Intentions (complete version)
CBS Playhouse 90: The Lie
The Dick Cavett Show: Ingmar Bergman
Ingmar Bergman: The Director
The Magic Lantern
Man Alive Presents Ingmar Bergman
The Open Mind: A Profile with Bergman
The Ritual
The South Bank Show: Bergman at Sixty

The Museum of Modern Art - Alf Sjöberg Screenings

Barabbas
Flowering Time
Home From Babylon
Iris and the Lieutenant
The Island
The Judge
Last Couple Out
Miss Julie
Special screening with Anita Björk
The Road to Heaven
The Royal Hunt
The Strongest
Torment

Saturday, June 17
Thirteen/WNET

The Magic Flute
Scenes from a Marriage
Through a Glass Darkly
Wild Strawberries
World of Film: Sweden

Monday, June 19
The Museum of Television & Radio
6:00 pm - *Scenes from a Marriage Seminar*
(with Bibi Andersson and Erland Josephson)

Friday, June 23 - Thursday, June 29
The Museum of Television & Radio

The Bergman File
The Best Intentions (complete version)
The Blessed Ones
CBS Playhouse 90: The Lie
The Dick Cavett Show: Ingmar Bergman
Ingmar Bergman: The Director
The Last Gasp (American Premiere)
The Magic Flute
Man Alive Presents Ingmar Bergman
The Open Mind: A Profile with Bergman
Public Broadcasting Lab: Ingmar Bergman
The Ritual
The South Bank Show: Bergman at Sixty
The Museum of Modern Art - Alf Sjöberg Screenings
The Father
Home From Babylon
Journey Out
Karin Månsdotter
Last Couple Out
Miss Julie
The Royal Hunt
They Staked Their Lives
The Strongest
Wild Birds

Friday, June 30 - Sunday, July 2
The Museum of Television & Radio
The Bergman File
The Last Gasp (American Premiere)
The Open Mind: A Profile of Bergman
Public Broadcasting Lab: Ingmar Bergman
Scenes from a Marriage (complete version)

Sunday, July 2
The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts Exhibit Continues to September 1

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

ED HAYES'S HUZZAHS

YOU ask my wife," Ed Hayes said the other day, in his tough-guy tenor. "I haven't slept in four years." Thus it wasn't unusual for Hayes, who is forty-seven, to climb out of bed at four-thirty in the morning, as he did on a recent Friday, get dressed, walk through the empty streets of the Upper East Side to a local newsstand, buy a paper, and tear through it to find confirmation of what he had learned the previous afternoon but still couldn't quite believe: Surrogate Eve Preminger had indeed awarded him and his law partner, Francis Harvey, more than seven million dollars in fees for their handling of Andy Warhol's estate. At that moment, standing on the corner of Lexington Avenue and Eighty-sixth Street, Hayes says, "That's when all of a sudden I started to feel free. If I'd lost, I'd have been ruined."

"Ruined" probably has a different meaning for Ed Hayes than it does for the rest of us. It might have meant a cutback in purchases of his trademark highly buffed black cap-toe shoes and suspenders. Or it might have meant unloading his vacation home in Bellport, Long Island, or his two-story apartment in a town house on East Eighty-first Street—the one decorated, if that's the word, with a large steel dragon and a sculpted claw gothically groping from a drainpipe in front. That town house could well be a metaphor for the man himself: behind the baroque façade, a staid, bourgeois interior.

The ordeal began on February 21, 1987—the day Andy Warhol died—when Fred Hughes, a close Warhol associate and the executor of the artist's estate, retained Hayes, an old friend. Over the next four years, the two men worked together closely, handling the Warhol

diaries, the Museum of Modern Art's Warhol retrospective, the sale of Warhol's magazine, *Interview*, and countless other transactions benefitting the estate. Hayes even asked Hughes to be his daughter's godfather. The trouble started in 1992, when it came time to set the value of Warhol's estate and, in turn, Hayes's fee, which had been negotiated at two per cent of the estate's total value. Hayes and Hughes estimated the total value to be more than six hundred million dollars, but Christie's and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts came in at about two hundred million. Soon enough, at the foundation's urging, Hughes changed sides and fired Hayes. "Hughes betrayed me," Hayes says. "He sold me out for money."

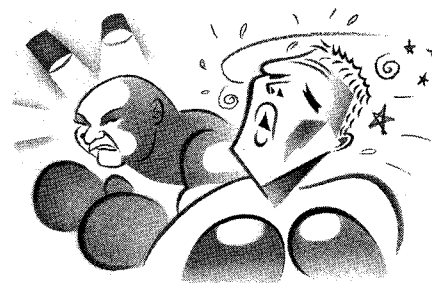
New York's subcultures of law, art, and the media resent no one more than the confident upstart, especially the lucky one. In the press, there was a predictable backlash against Hayes, but in the courtroom, where attorneys for the Warhol Foundation depicted him as negligent and grossly incompetent, it was even worse. To Hayes, the scenario seemed unpleasantly reminiscent of a Queens childhood in which, he says, "I was a skinny, ugly kid who lost more street fights than anybody on earth." He countered by maintaining a Zen-like focus, with so many trips to the gym that "my testosterone level was going through the roof." And he tended his personal myth in the media, comparing himself, a solo practitioner, to David, and his opponents at the Warhol Foundation, with its legions of lawyers, to Goliath.

In the big picture, the Warhol case was about whether a lucrative eighties deal could survive the puritanical financial ethic of the nineties. It was also about the proper administration of non-profits, since the money spent to deny Hayes his

due ultimately came from the Warhol Foundation, a charitable institution. For Hayes, though, the case became something simpler—an all-or-nothing battle for his reputation. "This wasn't like a six-month trial," he says. "This was eight years of intense pressure and intense scrutiny. This is me." In the end, Hayes walked away from the affair with money, vindication, and this tidbit of street wisdom: "The worst thugs I ever ran into were in the art business."

A CLOSE CALL IN LAS VEGAS

CONTROVERSY, of course. The phones in the media room began ringing within minutes of the announcement of the decision. Outrage! George Foreman's camp said afterward that the battle plan for the heavyweight championship had been all wrong. They had seen vid-



eotapes of the German challenger, Axel Schulz, in the ring. A fighter who comes straight at you—aggressive—but not a particularly punishing puncher, Schulz, they thought, was made to order for Foreman's great jab, his powerful counterpunches, and the ring knowledge from all those years. In sum, Foreman's opponent on a recent Saturday in Las Vegas was an unknown—not quite a bozo but close. "He does not bring much to

the table," Larry Merchant, the HBO commentator, said about Schulz. Presumably, he, too, had seen the tapes.

Angelo Dundee, one of the trainers in Foreman's corner, also didn't think his fighter would have much trouble. "He knows himself. Smart. Want me to tell you something about him? He's only thirty-six."

"Come on."

"He laid off for ten years after the Jimmy Young fight, when he got beat in San Juan. So for ten years he didn't get beat on fistically. Preach and eat—which he did better, I don't know. Laid off for ten years, until to make money he came back. So fistically you got to think of him as a thirty-six-year-old fighter."

"Fair enough. And tonight?"

"The German will come straight at him. I've seen the tapes. Hands up around his head. Got to bang through them with the jab."

Of course, coming straight at Foreman didn't turn out to be Schulz's tactic at all. From the very first, the German backed away, sidestepping, always keeping his distance; then, suddenly, just as one would begin to speculate that he was going to run all night, he would dart inside with a flurry of punches and lean against Foreman, tying him up, head to head, and when they broke, either at the referee's instigation or on their own, he'd cuff George as they came apart.

Foreman's style has always been to move solidly forward. Muhammad Ali's nickname for him was the Mummy—quite inspired, since it was easy to imagine that his slow, ponderous advance was indeed stoked by the movie monster's brew of *tana* leaves. When Schulz kept dancing away, Foreman was forced to go after him, hippety-hop, less the mummy than a gigantic rabbit. Occasionally, he would come within range of Schulz and throw out that wonderful pistonlike jab, and Schulz would retreat to the ropes, hastened in his flight by the blow.

From the look of the fighters in their corners between rounds, Schulz seemed to be getting the worst of it. At the bell, he flopped down in sheer exhaustion. While one of his handlers fanned him briskly with a towel, another worked desperately on his legs, kneading and jiggling them to keep the muscles loose. Foreman refused to sit down (he kicked the stool over at the end of the third

round), and stood leaning in the corner waiting for the bell with all the nonchalance of someone wondering vaguely whether to cross the street.

But appearances were deceiving. A bulge was visible above Foreman's left eye—large enough to begin to affect Foreman's vision, and presumably swelling as Schulz targeted it. Schulz's confidence grew. Increasingly, he moved in close, head to head, and Foreman began to glare at the referee, questioning the buffeting he was getting when the two were separated. All this delighted a considerable German contingent—more than two thousand were said to be in Las Vegas, to see the fight and to take advantage of the weakened dollar—and they rewarded their man with booming unison cries of "Ax-el! Ax-el!" The home-town crowd responded with "George! George!" and "Fore-man! Fore-man!" and, at one point, the Olympic rallying chant of "U.S.A.! U.S.A.!" By the twelfth, and final, round, the outcome was very much in doubt. At the bell, when Foreman seemed hardly able to throw a punch, much less connect, Schulz's handlers piled into the ring and hoisted their man aloft. They were sure they had it.

At that point, the evening belonged to the ring announcer, Michael Buffer, who is called up to read out the judges' decision at the conclusion of a fight. Buffer is especially noted in the boxing world for his rollicking delivery of the clarion outcry to get an evening's card under way, drawing out the "r"s with a panache that any native of Marseilles would envy: "Let's get *rr*eady to *rr*umble!" Indeed, he has registered that phrase as a trademark. A former male model, very natty in his tuxedo, Buffer is in his thirteenth year of announcing, and loves the dramatic. Earlier in the evening, he had announced the movie stars who had come to Las Vegas to



watch the fight, working his way up through Burt Reynolds and Bruce Willis to a climactic Jack Nicholson, dragging this last out so that, despite having no "r"s, it seemed to hang in the air long after he finished.

Buffer did not disappoint. One judge had the contest even, a second scored it 115-113, and the third gave it the same margin, which meant a clear-cut decision—but for *whom*? Buffer left that unanswered for a breathless two or three seconds, the packed arena as silent as a tomb, until finally he rolled out the words "and *still* . . .," the rest of it unheard in the abrupt tumult as Foreman, slowly and without much enthusiasm, raised his arms.

AFTERWARD, back in Foreman's dressing room, the atmosphere was subdued. The champion was lying on a rubbing table, wearing a faded red T-shirt and jockey briefs. An ointment was being applied to a knuckle. Angelo Dundee was working a chilled steel block against the puffed-up mouse above the left eye. "It was like fighting a billy goat," Foreman was saying. "Butt and run."

"That's right," someone said.

"You can't give the championship to someone who does nothing but retaliate."

"That's right."

"He hit on every break."

"Every one."

"I look like a junk-yard dog, but I was saved by the jab. No jab and we would have lost it."

No one had anything to say about that.

"Hey, you know what?"

Everyone leaned forward.

"The most tender thing I ever heard," Foreman said. "A wee voice, someone up in the stands, calling out 'U.S.A.!' and then everyone joining in so it was like a chant. I hadn't heard that since the Olympics in 1968. Almost made me cry. I heard it like a whisper. That won me the fight. That and the jab."

And perhaps, the more cynical would suggest, the three judges appointed by the Nevada Athletic Commission.

THE FRENCH VOTE

THE biographer Anka Muhlstein—her most recent book, "La Salle," appeared last year—is one of six thousand French citizens living in New York and registered to vote at the French Con-

sulate, and thus entitled to cast ballots there on France's Election Day. After the votes are counted, the totals are telegraphed to France, and then the official tally sheets are sent along by diplomatic pouch. The first round of Presidential voting, with nine competing candidates, was April 23rd; the runoff (between Paris mayor Jacques Chirac and Socialist Lionel Jospin) will be May 7th.

Walking from her apartment, on Park Avenue near Eightieth Street, to the Consulate, at Fifth Avenue and Seventy-fifth, Anka says, "I feel very strongly French. I've been here twenty years and I love the Public Library, but I feel culturally French." Still, she adds, French culture keeps changing. "Nowadays people say 'tu' immediately. My children tell me that if I say 'vous' I'll sound unfriendly."

Anka is a slender, graceful, dark-haired woman at once thoughtful and cheerful. Her cheerfulness bubbles as she greets her friend Dominique, who has just voted, outside the Consulate. After Dominique walks on up the Avenue, Anka joins a good-natured, not very tidy Francophone queue waiting to enter the limestone mansion. The group looks like a cross-section of the *hexagone*: old and young in *tailleurs* and denim mingle and exchange waves. Like Anka, the other voters are surprised by the size of the turnout, but the afternoon is lovely, the line sociable, and only little children show impatience. One woman tries to pacify her restless babe in arms by presenting her identity card. Seeing the photograph, the child cries in delight, "*C'est Maman!*"

Inside and out, the Consulate feels like a tea party without tea. Anka joins a line leading to a table on which stacks of small white tickets are laid out. Each stack bears the name of one of the nine candidates. There's also a pile of blue envelopes that say "*République Française*." Anka takes several tickets and one envelope and enters a voting booth. The secret of which ticket she puts in the envelope is guarded by an orange scrim curtain. When she emerges, envelope in hand, she joins a line leading to another long table, this one covered in green baize. After a helper verifies her identity (Anka's formal name is Anne), she drops her envelope into a large clear-plastic ballot box called *l'urne*, and signs the register.

Turning to leave, she meets her friend Hélène, and they trade news of weddings and the doings of friends' chil-

AMERICAN GOTHIC

TIMOTHY JAMES McVEIGH, the chief suspect in the recent bombing in Oklahoma City, grew up in the western corner of New York state, in Pendleton, a rural community of small farms and suburban homes twenty miles north of Buffalo and five miles southwest of Lockport. Pendleton is barely even a town, lacking

its own post office, commercial center, and coherent identity. It's more a region than a community, farmland interspersed with ranch houses of modest dimensions, often with flagpoles in the front yards (as in front of the McVeigh family's home). Here and there are the remains of old, weatherworn farmhouses, perhaps an old, rotted barn, coop, or silo—relics of an era so seemingly remote in 1995 that they might be from another century. Pendleton, like nearby Millersport, Rapids, Wrights Corners, and Cambria Center, is a place of such minimal visual identity that one suspects that lives here are intensely inward—in the way, that is, of contemporary "inwardness," a function not of the inner self, or soul, but of the media. If you seek identity in such places, you will take it from stylized, generic, action-oriented television or film images, not from the community. There is no community. By tradition, western New York state has been a region of hunters, fishermen, "sportsmen." Now that wildlife has been severely depleted, and hunting strictly regulated, gun lovers are often obliged to travel some distance to use their guns both passionately and legally.

In the mythos of the surrounding countryside, Lockport, with its twenty-five thousand inhabitants, is *the* city. When Timothy McVeigh spent time there, he would have been identified as "from the country"—the vague, just slightly pejorative designation given such boys and girls, as if identity might be a

matter of geography and distance. Until April 22nd, Lockport's most notable citizens were, arguably, the late William E. Miller (Barry Goldwater's running mate in the 1964 election), the late William G. Morgan, inventor of volleyball, and lately Dominic (Mike) Cuzzacrea, world-record holder for marathon running while flipping a pancake. It's a city of vertiginously steep hills built on the banks of the Erie Barge Canal—Lockport's predominant feature—which cuts through it in a deep

swath and divides it approximately in two. (The well-to-do sector is generally south of the canal, sloping upward; Lowertown, steeply downhill, has always been working-class, semi-industrial, relatively undeveloped.) Uptown are elegant mansions and walled "estates" dating as far back as the eighteen-fifties. Within its city limits, Lockport has changed very little since the nineteen-fifties, a decade of local prosperity. As soon as you cross the city limits, however, you're in Lockport Mall—Fast Food—Gas Station Hell, U.S.A.

Shabby not only at its edges, Lockport still exudes an air of romance. It might have been imagined in a more innocent time by Thornton Wilder or Edward Hopper, appropriated now by David Lynch. In the canal area, it seems to possess on even the sunniest days a faint sepia cast, as in an old photograph. Downtown Main Street has a look of malnourished "urban renewal"—reasonably new buildings juxtaposed with aged buildings, structures under perennial renovation, For Sale/For Lease signs, vacant lots in what would seem to be prime real-estate territory. It is the Barge Canal that draws one's attention, though. To walk along the canal's high banks, on cracked and littered pavement, gazing down at the foaming, black water below, is mesmerizing. Framed by dizzily



steep, stark stone walls, the canal has the look of a nightmare domesticated by frequent viewings, like German woodcuts in an edition of the Grimms' fairy tales.

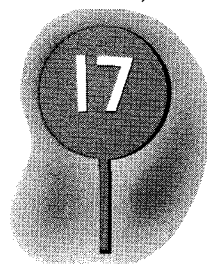
In Pendleton, at Star Point Central High School, Timothy McVeigh is said to have had an undistinguished, virtually anonymous career. The iconographic image of the fanatic, the madman, the lover of guns and explosion fantasies, the coolly plotting terrorist, is difficult to derive from such a modest, homogeneous American background. D. H. Lawrence described the essential American soul as "hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer," but this seems a romantic exaggeration in our media-processed time. To grow up in Pendleton, New York, is to know oneself distinctly marginal; wherever the fountainheads of significance, let alone power, they are surely not here, nor are they even within easy driving distance. The way to the marginal personality, like Timothy McVeigh's, must be through identification with power. When not isolates, such men (yes, they are nearly always men) join paramilitary groups or para-religious cults, for which they are often willing to die. In these groups, one is both nowhere and at the very center of power: the "power," at least, to destroy.

To visit such wholly American places as Pendleton and Lockport is to be granted a revelation: how little where we have lived, with whom we have lived, and of whom we are born has any longer to do, in the public sense, with who we are. What connection is there between place of origin and destiny? Where Timothy McVeigh came from is of relatively little significance set beside where, as a young man, he went: into the United States Army and the Gulf War, to a semi-rural paramilitary organization called the Michigan Militia, and, it now appears, to Oklahoma City and the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, with a crude homemade bomb, on April 19, 1995. Where we come from in America no longer signifies—it's where we go, and what we do when we get there, that tells us who we are.

—JOYCE CAROL OATES

dren. Outside the Consulate, the line of voters is growing. Nobody has talked politics, but, walking home, Anka isn't enthusiastic about any of the candidates. "Renewal in French politics is amazingly slow," she says. "It's very hard for a new man with new ideas to break through." She recalls that, in 1954, when she was a student at the Sorbonne, "Mendès France gave you a burst of political enthusiasm. He was clear and he was courageous. And in 1958, when de Gaulle came in, how could you not be moved? He was fiendishly political, but you had the feeling there was someone in charge. How could you not be grateful? I'm the generation where the boys might have to do their military service in Algeria. But none of *these* men have new ideas about the changes that have to be made." Anka is working on a biography of the Marquis de Custine, and it's consoling. "De Custine went to Russia at the same time Tocqueville went to America. De Custine was a conservative looking for arguments in favor of autocracy. The czar was very cordial, but de Custine came away in favor of democracy."

GOING, GOING, GONE



GEORGIA COLIN and Jean Stralem were wealthy widows who lived one floor away from each other, at 941 Park Avenue. Both women had magnificent art collections, and in their later years they were regularly besieged with kindnesses from art dealers, auction-house officials, and museum curators. Mrs. Colin died last November; Mrs. Stralem followed her six weeks later. And last February the returns came in: the auction houses won. On May 8th, Sotheby's will sell the Stralems' Impressionist and modern collection, including a Picasso for which Mrs. Stralem was once offered forty million dollars; two days later, Christie's will hammer down the Colin collection, composed largely of modern works.

Besides the coincidence of mortality and geography (which is not so remarkable when you consider that 941 Park was one of the first great Upper East Side buildings to welcome Jews), there's the striking and melancholy fact that two of

the finest examples of postwar American collecting are about to be simultaneously dismantled. Ralph Colin was William Paley's lawyer, a founder of the Art Dealers Association of America, and a man of real taste. Mrs. Stralem was the granddaughter of Philip Lehman, whose holdings now form the basis of the Lehman Wing at the Met. Despite this tradition, the heirs have decided against keeping any of the significant works for themselves, or donating them to museums. As a lawyer for the Stralem estate says, "The Lehman family has been very generous to museums. This is an asset of the estate, and there for the family."

The sad truth is that great American collections rarely outlast the collectors themselves. A love of art is not a hereditary characteristic, and the sixty-per-cent estate tax usually renders moral and aesthetic considerations irrelevant anyway. The same scene plays out again and again, a drama of competing, and severely unequal, interests. Thus:

THE HEIR—Ralph Colin, Jr., ascribes the decision that he and his sister made to sell virtually all of his parents' art works to "a combination of having to pay Uncle Sam and having to get something out of it." His father, he says, "was hoping that the works would stay together, but he understood that it was very likely that this was going to happen."

THE AUCTIONEER—Diana Brooks, the president and C.E.O. of Sotheby's, says of the paintings in the Stralem collection, "It looks like a collection that lived together." It is, she says, "bittersweet" to preside over its dispersal. On the bright side, she says, "it's going to be a great sale."

THE CURATOR—A European-paintings expert who did not want either his name or his museum to be disclosed said that he was "extremely" upset to see the Stralem and Colin collections sold off like so many job lots. Curators spend a good deal of time cultivating old ladies like Mrs. Stralem and Mrs. Colin. "We don't *expect* a return on investment," he said. "We just hope for it." Whatever his feeling, he was not inclined to pass judgment. The heirs, he concluded, are "just reacting to winning the lottery. I don't think any of us would have reacted differently." ♦

This week's contributors: Warren St. John, George Plimpton, Naomi Bliven, James Traub.

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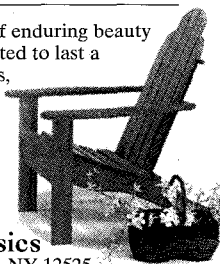
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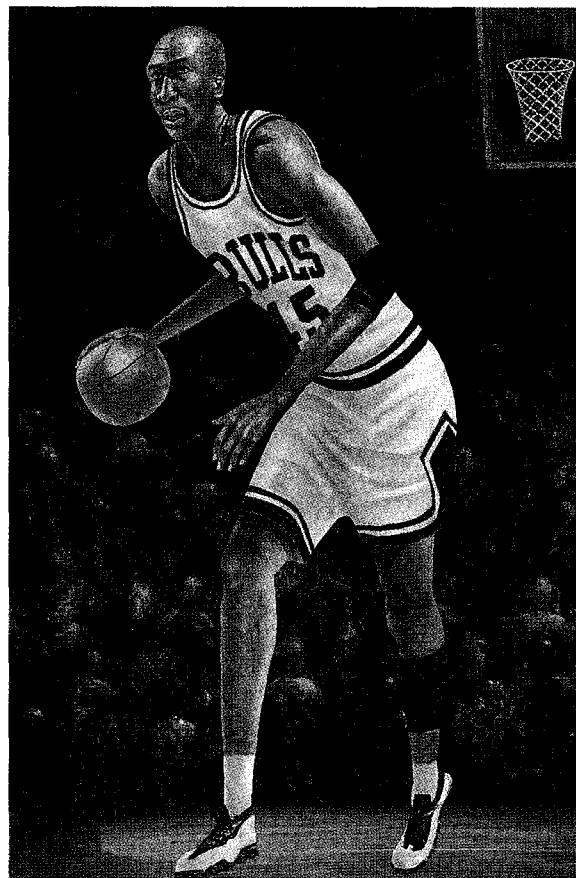
Whether Michael Jordan can win another championship is a minor point compared with the impact he will have on the troubled state of sports.

BY DAVID REMNICK

NEARLY all the old American basketball arenas have been abandoned or razed, victims of the corporate demand for more "luxury suites," more room to hawk the beer and the cheese dogs and the "regulation" Nerf balls. Boston Garden is scheduled for demolition (the Celtics have played their last season on the exquisitely warped floor), and Chicago Stadium, once a graceful barn on the West Side, is already gutted—four walls in search of the wrecking ball. The Bulls play their games now across the street at the United Center ("United" as in the airline, of course), and the place features all the new amenities: lots of bathrooms, nice parking, no rats. The United Center is huge, cool, and white: a mobster's mausoleum, the world's largest freezer unit. It is a distant place to watch an intimate sport; the "luxury suites" are so far from the court that the plutocrats keep their televisions on during the game. All around the National Basketball Association, the geniuses who own teams seem to have no faith in the

audiences or in basketball itself. At an ordinary weekend game at the Brendan Byrne Arena, in the Jersey swamps, not long ago, I sat through more low-end entertainment than Liberace knew in a lifetime. It was like Vegas Night at the Chamber of Commerce: fireworks and strobe lights during the introduction of the starting lineups; a karaoke contest; a recorded voice urging us to "stand up and cheer"; a recorded laugh mocking the efforts of a player at the foul line;

two guys dressed in mattresses who declared themselves "sumo wrestlers" and jumped on top of each other during time-outs; dancing "Jersey Girls"; prepubescent "Junior Jersey Kids"; a mascot called Super Dunk who shot foam-and-



Jordan cannot, it seems, live without the rush. Nor can his fans: the demand for No. 45 jerseys has spawned an industry.

plastic sticks into the crowd. It's this way just about everywhere—Chicago included.

Michael Jordan once promised that he would never play at the United Center—Chicago Stadium was his Old Vic, his artistic home—but, with his decision to rejoin the Bulls after his midlife sabbatical as a minor-league baseball player, he has deigned to enter the vulgar hall, and thus transform it. Just when the sports pages had become little more than

BLAIR DRAWSON

labor reports and police blotters, Jordan stepped in. He has saved the spring.

Jordan, who is the most self-conscious of performers, began his unretirement from basketball March 19th with a gig in Indiana. Except for some brief thrilling moments—a breakaway dunk in the first half, a ferocious struggle for the ball with Reggie Miller in the second—he proved rusty against the Pacers: errant on the jump shot, winded at times, out of synch with his new teammates, barely reacquainted with the old. The Bulls' Croatian forward, Toni Kukoc, who had been heartbroken two years ago to discover that Jordan was leaving the team just as he was joining it, seemed daunted now by the return of his hero. Kukoc spent much of the Indiana game with his feet glued to the floor, his jaw slack. Like so many millions of others, Kukoc was delighted just to be watching Jordan—even a temporarily mortal Jordan—play the game again.

Jordan's first game in Chicago came five days later, against the Orlando Magic, a first-place team featuring two of the best young talents in the sport: Shaquille O'Neal, a Goliath with grace, and Anfernee (Penny) Hardaway, a silky guard who, with his preternatural sense for the flow of the game, reminds everyone of Earvin (Magic) Johnson. An hour before tipoff, I was talking with Hardaway in the Orlando locker room. The United Center's locker rooms are, admittedly, very new, very clean, like a suburban den. Ordinarily, teams play tapes of the night's opponents, but the Orlando players seemed determined to convince themselves that it was Michael Jordan who ought to be concerned about them. An episode of "Star Trek: The Next Generation" played on the television. Hardaway, for his part, wore a T-shirt bearing the hermetic logo

Step Up, I Lay You,
Step Off, I T' You,
Foul Me, I Trey You,
I Gotta Get P.A.I.D.

In-your-face braggadocio is the lingua franca of the N.B.A., but where Jordan was concerned Hardaway did not mimic the rhetoric of his T-shirt. He was worshipful, even wary. To play against Jordan "was something I always wanted," he said. "When he retired before I had a chance to play against him, I felt cheated. It's strange. One guy comes back and everything changes.

Everybody's *thoughts* change." It was amazing how readily the players and coaches around the league deferred to Jordan. Indiana's coach, Larry Brown, suggested that Chicago, barely a winning team through mid-March, could now win the N.B.A. championship. Chuck Person, of the San Antonio Spurs, used a mystical vocabulary. "He's like a poltergeist," he said of Jordan. "He's an incident by himself."

Out on the court, a few players were getting limber, taking desultory jump shots, walking through moves they would later attempt at frenetic speed. Unguarded, unhindered by an opponent whacking him in the ribs or waving a hand in his eyes, even a backup player like the Chicago forward Corie Blount hit seventy or eighty per cent of his shots. It means nothing. In baseball, players are competing mainly against the difficulty of the sport itself, the almost laughable improbability of hitting a speeding baseball with a flame-tempered twig. Baseball is such a hard game that small children modify it (they hit off a tee) and the middle-aged *enlarge* it (calling it softball). In basketball, the fundamentals—shooting, passing, rebounding—are relatively easy to manage, at least in the solitude of an empty schoolyard; the difficulty comes in competing against the athleticism, the obstructions and wiles, of an aggressive opponent. Anyone can hit a fifteen-foot shot, sneakers to the floor; only a professional can manage it with a leaping lump of muscle in his face. That's why Jordan is so much better than anyone else who has ever played the game. He plays as if in solitude. High in the air, his legs splayed, his tongue flopping out of his mouth, he seems weirdly relaxed, calm, as if there were no one special around and plenty of time to think through his next move, floating all the while. Faced with double coverage, as he almost always is, Jordan finds a way to wedge between defenders, elevate as if on an invisible forklift, his legs dangling, and then drop the ball through the hoop. The ease of his game makes the rest of the players, all of them stars in college, look rough, somehow—clumsy, a step slow. "Scoring is scoring," Jordan says serenely in "Rare Air," his autobiography. "If I want to average 32 points a game, I can do that easily. It's just eight, eight, eight, eight. No problem. I can do



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that anytime. That's not being cocky. That's confidence."

In the late eighties, the Detroit Pistons, coached by Chuck Daly, seemed to find a way to stop a Chicago team that was, at the time, so lopsided in talent that it was often known in the papers as "Michael Jordan and the Jordanares." With a jaunty bounce of pride in his voice, Daly told me, "Michael is a player with no weaknesses—he has all these skills, great intelligence, a bionic physical presence—and so when we played him we devised a strategy called the Jordan Rules. We committed ourselves to double-teaming him and, if we could, steering him to his left, his presumably weaker hand. But you know what? Jordan outgrew the Jordan Rules. He just learned to play through them." Others are more dubious, and remember that it was the Pistons' brutality—their stray elbows and surreptitious shoves—that worked so well. Frank Layden, the former Utah Jazz coach, once said to Jordan's biographer Jim Naughton, "The Jordan Rules? You know what the Jordan Rule is, don't you? Knock him on his ass. They can talk all they want, but the one thing they did—when he got in midair—they knocked him down."

The crowd is desperate to set eyes on Jordan. Four huge video screens above the court are playing a tape loop of his greatest hits—scenes from his career in high school, at the University of North Carolina, and on the Bulls. The screens are also playing his collected commercials—McDonald's, Gatorade, Nike, Coca-Cola—as if these, too, were part of his game. The film will have to do for a while. Jordan, who has been trying to get used to this alien arena's bright lights and tight rims with solitary workouts in the afternoon, is out of sight, hanging back in a room reserved for players having their ankles taped. "No Press Beyond This Point," the sign says. In the open, main part of the locker room, many of the Bulls come and go, dressing, watching film of old Orlando games, wearily answering questions about their returning leader.

The Bulls have handed out hundreds of press passes for this game, and everyone's mandate is the same: Get Jordan—Jordan pictures, Jordan quotes. Both the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times* published special pullout sections in the morning; the local television sta-

tions have been broadcasting live from courtside since late afternoon. The press cannot afford to miss a Jordan sighting. A pack of reporters and half a dozen cameras all cluster near his locker. As a group, we gaze at his open closet and the vestments dangling therein: a mustard-colored sports coat on a hanger, slacks and shirt on hooks. There is, as well, a heap of basketball shoes, a box of Bubble Yum. We all stare, as if doing so would draw Jordan into the room.

It is a strange tableau, and on the other side of the room one of the Bulls' centers starts laughing. At first, it is hard to tell which center: Luc Longley, the Aussie; Bill Wennington, the bearded one; or Will Perdue, who wears a Hannibal Lecter mask to protect his face. All three are big, bulky white guys; they look like bouncers at a very tough club.

"Hey, boys, you never look at my locker that way!" It's Wennington, the one with the beard.

Then, under deadline pressure, one of the cameramen says, "I gotta have something!" He angles his camera lens toward the closet floor. He is filming a jockstrap. Written on the waistband is "Jordan, #45."

MICHAEL JORDAN leads one of the grandest and most peculiar American lives since Elvis left the building. His return this spring has been big news in Chicago, and in Chengdu, too. The *China Sports Daily* said in its story, "This flying man, Qiao Dan"—M.J. in

HOW LIKE THE SOUND

How like the sound of laughing weeping
is. I wasn't sure until I saw your face—
your eyes squeezed shut, and the big
hot tears spurring out.

There you sat, upright, in your mother's
reclining chair, tattered from the wear
of many years. Not since childhood
had you wept this way, head back, throat

open like a hound. Of course the howling
had to stop. I saw you add *call realtor*
to your list before your red face
vanished behind the morning *Register*.

—JANE KENYON
(1947-1995)

Mandarin—"is still the most popular sports star on earth." He may also be the most valuable human commodity in sports. He earns about thirty million dollars a year endorsing products—nearly eight times his basketball salary. Every detail of his return has implications. The mere rumor that he might return to basketball caused Nike stock to soar. Simply by changing his jersey number from 23 to 45, he spawned an industry. Every kid in the country wants the new shirt. Champion, the company that makes the official shirts, has ordered its plant in Winston-Salem to add a midnight-to-eight shift to fill the demand.

At the age of thirty-two, Jordan is the subject of picture books, a shelfload of biographies, and countless videocassettes, and his face appears on lunch boxes, drinking cups, sneakers. In Chicago, his image is everywhere, like Kim Il Sung's in Pyongyang. Every one of Jordan's endorsements is designed to make him (and, therefore, the product) heroic, available, pleasant, elegant, "beyond race." Even academe has turned its eyes to the Air. ("Finally, there is the subversion of perceived limits through the use of *edifying deception*, which in Jordan's case centers around the space/time continuum," Michael Eric Dyson, of the Chicago Theological Seminary, explains in his essay "Be Like Mike? Michael Jordan and the Pedagogy of Desire.") So that Jordan can get his teeth fixed without causing a commotion, his

dentist comes in on a day off; his barber used to do the same, but Jordan shaves his own head these days, giving it the pleasing burnished look of an antique desk. Once, Jordan was out on the golf course and paused to finish eating an apple. He threw the core into the woods, and suddenly a group of kids, who had been following his foursome, ran off in search of the remains. "Please, please don't do that," Jordan said. Jordan receives between forty and fifty letters every week from dying children who tell him that it is their last wish on earth to meet him. He obliges as many as he can; to the rest, he sends a pair of Air Jordans that he has worn in a game. One child, who died of leukemia, was buried wearing the size-13 shoes that Jordan had given him.

On October 6, 1993, Jordan announced that he was quitting professional basketball to spend more time with his family. (Jordan and his wife, Juanita, have three children.) "I'm going to watch the grass grow and I'm going to have to cut it," he said. Basketball fans accustomed to watching aging superstars lurch on until the last possible paycheck were shocked—Jordan's skills had not fallen off at all—but, with time, his decision began to make some sense. The Bulls had won three championships in a row, putting to rest the shibboleth of Jordan as a ball hog incapable of giving up some shots for the good of the team. In the end, Jordan had raised the level of every player on the Bulls, including the mysterious and pouty all-star Scottie Pippen. There was nothing left to prove on that score.

Jordan's decision to retire also had an artistic dimension. His career was his *œuvre*, and he refused to tarnish it with an autumnal slide into repetition or self-parody. In the short run, he was depriving us of his presence and weakening the entire enterprise of professional basketball, but in the longer view we would never have to remember him logy and diminished as he closed in on middle age. Jordan had long been a student of the career of Julius Erving—the purposeful flamboyance on the court, the studied grace when dealing with reporters and advertisers—and he did not want to end up as Erving had in his final years, reduced to ordinary standards of play. Jordan's art would know no senescence; our memories would remain pure.

What was more, his closest friend

and adviser—his father, James Jordan—was killed in a robbery that summer. It was hard to argue with the decision. The man was just worn out in every way. After so many years of playing the perfect gentleman for the press, after enduring the sanctimonious criticism of his gambling, Jordan revealed in his retirement news conference a Nixonian prickliness, a mock gratitude that he would no longer have to put up with "you guys," the reporters.

Jordan was getting out before his desire or his legs or his grace abandoned him. If fans did not like it—well, then, we would have to learn to live with it. In an issue of *Sport* that appeared at a time when he was already reconsidering his decision to retire, Jordan was asked if it concerned him that he had left behind an "emptiness" in his fans and in the game itself. "I'm sorry, but it doesn't," he said. "Unfortunately, people are going to be thinking that way for years because I'm through. I'm not coming back. At least, that's my feeling right now. I know there are people who wish I was still playing basketball, but at some point in time, either now or 20 years from now, those people will get over it. I apologize if some people think that's selfish of me, but that's the way it is."

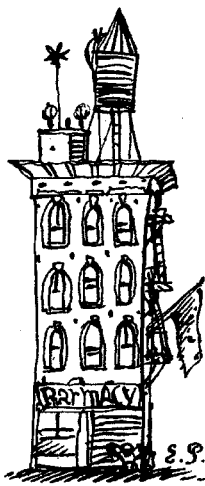
Of course, Jordan's retirement had little to do with his desire to play catch in the backyard with his children. Having satisfied his familial longings in a matter of a few months, he signed on to play baseball for the Chicago White Sox, who assigned him to their Double-A club, the Birmingham Barons. It was something like a lark—Jordan had not played baseball since he was in high school—but not quite. Jordan is a competition maniac—his friends have seen him get hysterical when he loses at golf, poker, or Ping-Pong; he has lost hundreds of thousands of dollars betting with shady characters on the golf course—and he cannot, it seems, live without the rush. James Jordan often said, "My son doesn't have a gambling problem. What he does have is a *competition* problem." Unfortunately, he had chosen for his lark the most impossible of games, and one he had little hope of mastering. In countless feature stories on television and in

print we were witness to the spectacle of Michael Jordan as George Plimpton, the amateur at play, and it was not an entirely pretty sight: Jordan fanned at curveballs, he lost fly balls in the sun. He was game and serious, but as a baseball player he was never more than a novelty act—and, in his own way, he had the decency to admit it. "This has been a very humbling experience," he said.

Meanwhile, the vacuum in Chicago was becoming increasingly apparent. The Bulls did well enough without Jordan in the 1993-94 regular season—they won fifty-five of eighty-two games—but, faced with the New York Knicks in the playoffs, they found their limits. They lost, four games to three. This year, the slide was more precipitous: suddenly the Bulls were not much more than a .500 team, a mediocrity. Pippen remained a star, but, unlike Jordan, he could not make stars of his more earthbound teammates. The yearning for Jordan was painful to witness. Every night before Bulls games, fans would come early to the new arena and mill around a statue of Jordan—a soaring construction of the master about to dunk, and, underneath, the inscription "Michael Jordan 1984-93. The best there ever was. The best there ever

will be." Even in the worst Chicago cold, fans would trade Jordan stories, remembering particular moments in his career: the change-of-hands-look-I'm-still-up-here-floating layup that blew everyone's mind and ruined an aging Lakers team in the 1990-91 finals; the eyes-closed foul shots; the kiss-the-rim slams.

Jordan's absence from the game left the league with middling champions and no leading man. The N.B.A. is full of young players with fantastic potential: O'Neal and Hardaway may turn out to be the cornerstones for a dynasty in Orlando; a rookie guard in Dallas, Jason Kidd, has made a team out of the beleaguered Mavericks; Glenn (Big Dog) Robinson is a hit in Milwaukee; and Detroit's Grant Hill, a player of rubbery grace and fine manners, is already the league's official answer to the spoiled stars who skip games and practices with bogus injuries and then demand salaries in the tens of millions of dollars. But none of these players were



ready to fill the Jordan gap, and everyone in the league office and in the press knew it. The N.B.A., which had been so ascendant with Jordan, Magic, and Bird in the game, was in a slump.

Late last spring, while the Knicks were attempting to slug, shove, and trash-talk their way past the Houston Rockets in the N.B.A. championship series, I sat in the Madison Square Garden press section with a friend—Michael Wilbon, who is a columnist for the sports pages of the *Washington Post*. Wilbon's life, as far as I have been able to read it, is a non-stop busman's holiday. He is a basketball fan—a basketball *fanatic*—who is paid by his editors to follow the game as closely as he can. He complies. He has racked up a million frequent-flier miles, mainly in the pursuit of basketball games, but he is not likely to use his off-season to hit the beaches in, say, Tahiti. As Wilbon would say, "you can't get no goddam ESPN in no goddam Papeete." And yet, as we watched the Knicks and the Rockets pound up and down the boards in quest of the N.B.A. title that night at the Garden, it was clear that Wilbon was taking no pleasure in this series. He de-

spised its artlessness. He frowned at every collision, sneered at every turnover. For me, as for nearly everyone else at the Garden that night, the possibility of a Knicks triumph was a chance to relive the singular thrill of an age ago: the championship of 1969-70, when Willis Reed, his injured leg shot up with painkillers, limped out onto the Garden floor (El Cid of Louisiana) and led the team to its legendary victory over Wilt Chamberlain and the Los Angeles Lakers. But Wilbon is not of this city—he is Chicago born—and he was having none of it.

"This game is a dog," he declared.

"Why's that?"

"Michael's hitting .200 in Birmingham and these fools think they're winning a championship."

My illusions were now shot. The Knicks were suddenly there before me in all their limitations—plodding, erratic, hysterical, a squad of lager louts trying to scare their betters by whacking their hands on the bar and talking too loud. The Rockets were more obviously a limited flock, a team with an extraordinary center—the Nigerian Hakeem Olajuwon—and four guys named Ed. In the end, the Rockets won the misbegotten

series, and everyone except the participants and their dependents has long forgotten the whole thing.

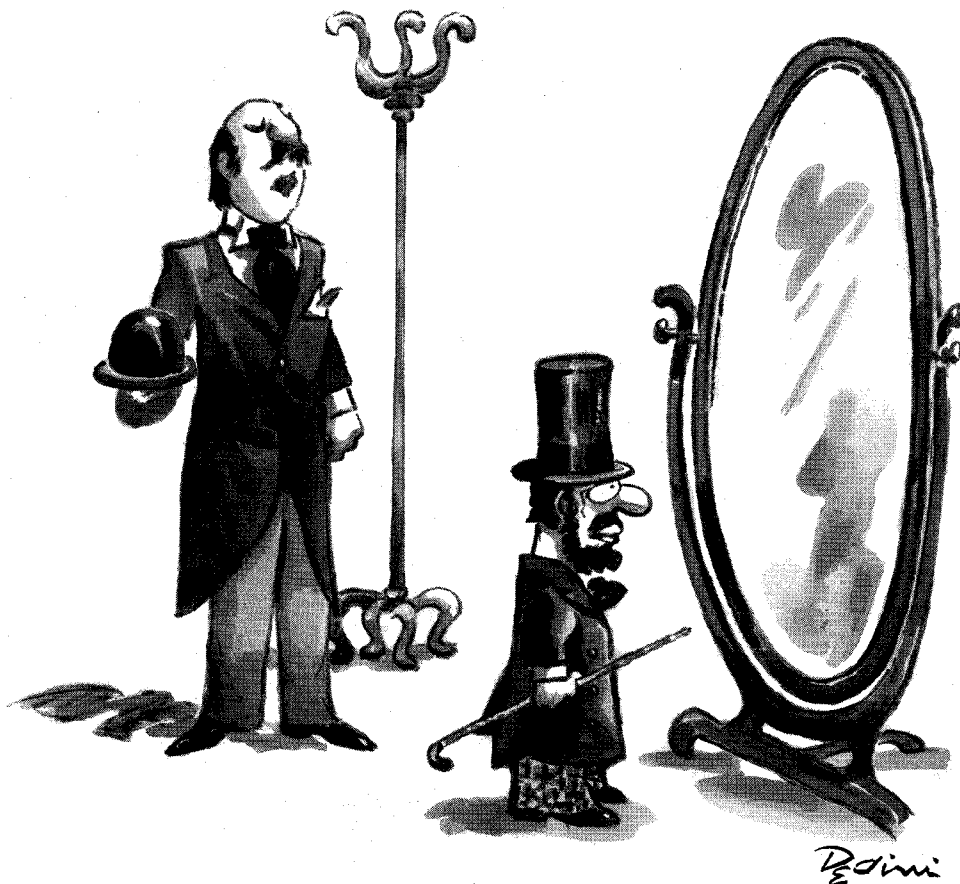
Michael Jordan's return has rescued basketball from more mediocrity. He reminds us why we buy the tickets, why watching is not a waste of time; and the degree of gratitude is not just great but strange. In early March, while Jordan was merely reconsidering his status, I read a Mike Wilbon column in the *Post* in which he declared, without irony, that he would gladly give two years of his life if Jordan would only return to the Bulls.

Not long afterward, Wilbon, the league, the city of Chicago, even Knicks fans—all of us—got our wish. Jordan announced his intention by sending a fax through his agent's office. "I'm back," Jordan wrote, and that was all. Wilbon, pay up.

THE Orlando game was a bust. Jordan shot too much and he shot too long. Seven of twenty-three from the field. His jumpers kept banging off the butt of the rim. Over and over. He was like a man who keeps pumping the gas pedal until the engine floods and the car dies. And then he turns the key again and pumps, just to make *sure*: 106-99, Magic. But, in a sense, Jordan was right to shoot as much as he did. Chicago had no prayer of going far in the playoffs unless Jordan got his timing back. A regular-season loss to Orlando was a small price to pay.

Jordan walked into the interview room trailed by a Presidential-size security detail. (He does not do the naked-interview thing. He showers and dresses first, and all await him.) He managed to look spectacular in that mustard-colored jacket, but he could not hide his frustration. He was more bewildered than anything else. "I just can't turn it on," he said. "As much as I want to, I just can't turn it on. It will take time."

Jordan was in a five-week, seventeen-game race before the playoffs to retune himself to basketball. He had been away from the professional game for six hundred and thirty-six days—nearly two full seasons—and in that time he had hardly touched a ball bigger than a baseball. "When I was down in the minors, every guy wanted to play me in basketball," he said. "I used to play on Sundays with some of the guys in Arizona. We'd go and rent a gym and play pickup games. And I think these guys thought



"The derby is better. That makes you look like Abraham Lincoln."

I'm retired—or maybe they're like me, they think they can be a basketball player just as much as I think I can be a baseball player. But, really, each time I played, my appetite got a little bit greater."

Jordan himself never doubted that he could return and average thirty-odd points a game—in other words, lead the league in scoring—but the *Chicago Tribune*, which chronicles the Life of Michael with definitive attention, pressed some medical experts on the nervous question. "We tested Michael at our biochemical lab during his previous playing days," Dr. Charles Bush-Joseph, of the sports-medicine section of Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, told the *Tribune*. "He was off the charts in his ability to generate power in the legs. At thirty-two, he is a bit past a man's physical prime in terms of quickness and explosiveness, but his high level of skills can more than cover any such loss. He just needs time to get back his neuromuscular edge—more commonly known as timing."

For my own peace of mind, I talked with two of Jordan's precursors at the guard position—Bob Cousy and Walt Frazier—and neither had any doubt that Jordan would scrape off the rust in time for the trials of May. Retired ballplayers—especially players of a certain level—are often touchy about the subject of the current crop. They can be grouchy, deliberately uncomprehending, like aging composers whining about the new-fangled twelve-tone stuff. But not where Jordan is concerned. Cousy, who led the Celtics in the fifties and early sixties, and Frazier, who led the Knicks in the late sixties and the seventies, would not begrudge Jordan his eminence.

"Until six or seven years ago, I thought Larry Bird was the best player I had ever seen," Cousy, who works as a broadcaster for his old team, said. "Now there is no question in anyone's mind that Jordan is the best. He has no perceptible weaknesses. He is perhaps the most gifted athlete who has ever played this foolish game, and that helps, but there are a lot of great athletes in this league. It's a matter of will, too. Jordan is always in what I call a ready position, like a jungle animal who is always alert, stalking, searching. It's like the shortstop getting down and crouching with every pitch. Jordan has that awareness, and

that costs you physically. If you do it, you are so exhausted you have trouble getting out of bed in the morning. Not many athletes do it. To me, he hasn't lost a thing."

"Leapers are usually not great shooters, but Michael is the exception," Frazier said. "If you give him a few inches, he buries the jump shot. When he gets inside, his back is to the basket and he's shakin' and bakin' and you're dead. When he drives, good night. He's gone. Now that the league has made hand-checking illegal—you can't push your man around on defense any longer—it's conceivable that Michael could score even more. I don't think he's even sensed that he has more license now. When he does, he'll be scoring sixty if he feels like it."

FOR the next few weeks after the Orlando game, I followed Jordan, at various arenas and on the tube. Game by game, he was playing his way into condition. He hit a game-winning shot against the Hawks in Atlanta. He iced the Celtics in Boston. Most important of all, even when his shot was off he did enough of the other things—passing, rebounding, defending, and exhorting his teammates, his eyes narrowed with impatience—that suddenly the Bulls were once more a top-rank team. Pippen was getting the ball enough to satisfy his sensitivities; Kukoc was realizing he could play with, and not merely worship, Jordan; even the three amigos—Wenington, Longley, and Perdue—seemed smoother, professional, in the game.

Curiously, the only deficiency in Jordan's game was his tendency to shoot poorly at the United Center. "I guess I'm used to playing across the street at the Stadium," he said one night. "This is a new surrounding. But the court dimensions are the same." He had faith in his own powers of concentration. Suddenly his life was strange and cluttered again, a mass of requests and fans and commercials. "But once I step on the court I'm having fun," he said. "That's the good part."

On March 28th, the Bulls played the Knicks at Madison Square Garden. No crowd at the Garden had been this jumpy since the playoffs last year. Most of the new arenas diffuse the noise of the crowd—spread it out and turn it into a muffled undertone, a murmur. The

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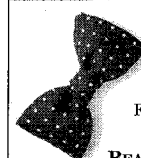
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Garden on a good night still rumbles, and once Jordan stepped on the floor the crowd kept up a steady roar—half in pleasure, half in fear for the home team. Against New York, Jordan is guarded by the most temperamental of the defenders he faces—John Starks, a young man who is capable of brilliance one night and errant rage another, and then a long, inert period of funk; he is maddeningly inconsistent, more talent than player. To be a Knicks fan is to be forced to live with the moody vacillations of John Starks. It is no way to live. And yet five minutes into his encounter with Jordan I felt for Starks, felt for him deeply. From the opening tap, Starks did the best he could, steering Jordan to his supposedly bad hand (the left), guiding him into other defenders, jumping high with the shot. It was all for nothing. Jordan opened the game with a jumper, shot as casually as tossing a stone into a lake. The next time Jordan had the ball, he palmed it, and waved it up and down, teasing Starks, as if this were a Globetrotters act and Starks were the paid dupe. Another score. Not long after that, Jordan caught a pass on the baseline and, before putting the ball on the floor, did a little trick in which he began arching his back, rocking back and forth, mesmerizing Starks. Suddenly, as Starks fell into the sleepy rhythm, Jordan spun and dashed around him. The layup, of course, was good. Starks trotted up the court on offense blinking, stone-faced, determined not to betray the frustration he was feeling.

From then on, my notes are a whacked-out mess—a stream of underlinings, exclamation points, hieroglyphs, each centered on another Jordanian amazement. By the end of the first quarter, he had twenty points. What was, secondarily, so thrilling about the game was that the rest of the players on the floor (Starks included) were at their best. I don't know that I have ever seen a better game in the regular season. The Knicks were freed of their psychoses. No one kicked the scorer's table. No one dissed the coach. There were no head butts, body slams, or petty screeds. Derek Harper drew a harmless technical foul. (As usual, he earned it, and then pulled off a theatrical palms-up protest of innocence, the way professional wrestlers do when they are ac-

cused of producing a "foreign object" from their shorts.) The Knicks were doing all they could to win. Were it not for Jordan's performance, Patrick Ewing might have been the morning headline.

But, of course, it was Jordan's night, and, as the game went on, Starks—alas, poor Starks!—began to wear the mask of infinite pain. Jordan hit shot after shot. There have been times in the past when his teammates, wearied of their role as supporting players, have rebelled against their leader's dominance. At one point against the Knicks, Scottie Pippen, a player of remarkable talents but delicate ego, seemed to ignore Jordan, who was open for a layup, and instead threw up an absurd bomb from long range, as if to say, "No, Michael, I will not *always* yield to you." Except for that moment, the Bulls meshed as well as they had in two years.

For the Knicks, and for the rest of the teams in the N.B.A. that may face the Bulls this spring in the playoffs, the final play was the most dangerous—the one that sent out a reminder of Jordan's dimensions as an athlete. Part of why we cleave to sports and fandom (besides the sheer escapism) is that excellence is so measurable, so knowable in numbers. The .500 shooter averaging twenty-five points and a dozen rebounds a game is an all-star; the .410 shooter averaging fewer points and boards is a mediocrity. Jordan's numbers—his seven consecutive scoring championships, his stats as a rebounder, passer, and defensive thief—easily identify him as among the best to play the game. The last play against the Knicks shades in the picture; it identifies him as—well, supernatural.

There were fourteen seconds left. The score was 111–111. By then, Jordan had fifty-five points. I was somehow relieved that the game would soon end. Jordan was performing at such a level that it seemed inevitable that he would find a way to score and end it. And to go on watching Starks continue his futile mission had about it a quality of voyeurism, cruelty. Jordan was humiliating

a weaker opponent. At times, it was beautiful to witness; at others, it was like watching a man poke a wounded dog with a stick.

Jordan handled the ball. After letting a few seconds melt off the clock, he closed in toward the side of the lane. He drove hard to the right, dipping his shoulder, and then cut sharply to his left and toward the basket. Starks stumbled. He was beginning to lose his man. Suddenly, Ewing, all seven feet of him, stepped forward to help smother Jordan. Now there were just five seconds on the clock. Jordan coiled and jumped, leaving his feet as if to shoot. As he would admit later, shooting had been his intention all along. How can you not shoot with fifty-five points already? ("I'd be lying if I said I came out to pass the ball.") But now the logic of the moment had changed. Ewing had gambled—it was a smart gamble, for there are times when Jordan is sure that he has a better chance of scoring over two men than a teammate has of scoring unattended. Not now. In the huddle, Jordan had advised Wennington, the slow-footed center, that there was a chance—not a *big* chance, but a chance—that he would get a pass if the play broke just so. Which is how it broke. Even in midair, in the tensest moment of a game, Jordan has a look of both concentration and calm, as if he knew he was capable of suspending himself until the proper decision is finally made. Meanwhile, everyone else is frantic, flailing. And now, after passing up what would have been a low-percentage shot, even for him, with Knicks leaping all around him, Jordan shovelled a pass to Wennington. The center gathered the ball in, jumped, and hit the point-blank shot: 113–111. Game.

Afterward, the Knicks coach, Pat Riley, said that yes, of course he admired Jordan's performance, but he betrayed, as well, an overtired testiness. "You're gonna talk a lot about Michael tomorrow," he told the reporters surrounding him. "But it would have been a hell of a thing if he had scored fifty-five and we'd won. It would have been a different story line." Three weeks later, at the United Center against the Knicks, Jordan did not need to play half as well as he had in New York. This time, he shared the ball with Pippen, and the two of them destroyed New York. Jordan is right. He's back. ♦



LETTER FROM BOSNIA

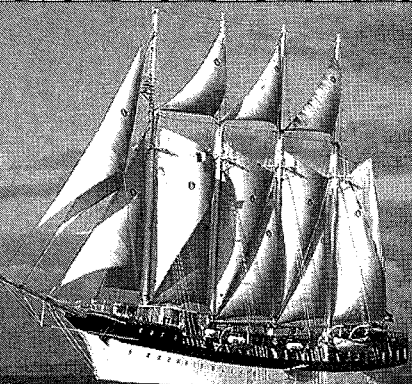
THE AGE OF THE PARASTATE

Five years of quagmire in the Balkans has allowed the rise of a lethal new order. It cannot make peace because it is designed to make war.

BY MISHA GLENNY



Parastatehood: a Muslim boy runs for cover from sniper fire.



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THE violent disintegration of Yugoslavia has given many things to the world. It has reminded us that European values need not mean tolerance, culture, and affluence—they can also entail brutality, primitivism, and misery. It has enriched our political vocabulary, seemingly forever, with the phrase "ethnic cleansing." In constitutional terms, the Yugoslav breakup has given rise to something much more opaque yet perhaps just as important. That is the "parastate," a remarkable phenomenon that has triumphed in the mountainous territory that until five years ago was the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The parastate emerges as the mutant offspring of an expiring failed state. If Tito's Yugoslavia could be compared to a normal human being, albeit a bit wobbly in the knees, its children are a bunch of youthful George Romero extras, in varying stages of decay—an arm lopped off here, an eye squeezed out of its socket there. Boasting certain essential attributes of a normal state but grotesquely lacking in others, the parastate has found fruitful conditions for its development in those regions of Europe

that made up the farthest outreaches of the early modern empires. The ghastly side of European history has attained its apotheosis in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the continent's three great imperial religions met: Roman Catholicism, the confessional tool of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; Eastern Orthodoxy, whose guardian was Muscovy; and Islam, sponsored by the Ottoman Empire. Seventy-five years after the collapse of the imperial system, a replacement for it is still being sought. But too many peoples are scrambling to establish nation-states on too small a patch of land.

The peoples are the Serbs, the Muslims, and the Croats. After Tito died, in 1980, the Yugoslav government was increasingly decentralized. This provoked a struggle for influence between the most westerly republic, Slovenia, which sought greater autonomy, and Serbia, whose aim was to maintain a centralized Yugoslavia. To strengthen Serbia's position, Slobodan Milošević, formerly a loyal Communist Party hack, unleashed the demon of Serb nationalism. In Croatia, which borders Slovenia, the majority Croats responded in the spring of

GILES PERESS/MAGNUM PHOTOS

1990 by electing as President Franjo Tudjman, whose ferocious nationalism matched Milošević's step for step. Croatia and Slovenia began heading toward secession. Slovenia, with no significant minority population, did so without difficulty. But the Serbs living in the rural areas of Croatia rebelled, and they were backed by the artillery of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav People's Army. These Serbs were motivated both by a Greater Serbian ideology and by the memory of Croat atrocities against their grandparents during the Second World War. Yugoslavia turned to violence.

Until January, 1992, international legal precedent determined that recognition would be granted to states only if they had a "defined territory." Generally, this was understood as control over the land in question. But then the European Union, driven by German support for Croatia, recognized both Croatia and Slovenia. At that point, the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Muslim Alija Izetbegović, had to decide whether to remain in a rump Yugoslavia, dominated by Serbia and Milošević, or to apply for recognition. He opted for recognition. Even though Bosnia-Herzegovina had never existed as an independent state in modern times, even though the state could not support itself, and even though the Eu-

ropean Union and the United States had no intention of defending Bosnia, the international community decided to recognize it. As soon as that happened, on April 7, 1992, the Serbs and the Croats began to tear it limb from limb. Three bloodied little parastates emerged: the Muslim-dominated Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Serb Republic, and the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia.

In terms of size, the dominant parastate is the Serb Republic, often referred to by journalists as "Bosnian Serb-held territory" and not to be confused with Serbia itself. Led by Dr. Radovan Karadžić and his military commander, General Ratko Mladić (both of whom are under investigation by the United Nations as suspected war criminals), it has its capital in an outlying suburb of Sarajevo called Pale, the site of many of the 1984 Olympic ski competitions. Initially, the Bosnian Serbs were backed by Serbia, but last year Milošević and Karadžić fell out over Karadžić's refusal to accept an international peace plan for Bosnia.

The predominantly Muslim parastate of Bosnia-Herzegovina, for its part, exists primarily as a large wedge between the Serb and the Croat areas, and includes four additional enclaves uncomfortably squeezed by Serb territory: three in the east—Goražde, Žepa,

and Srebrenica—and the Bihać pocket in the northwest. Generally referred to as "the Bosnian government," on account of its international recognition, this parastate is based in Sarajevo and is led by President Izetbegović, who is also the leader of the ruling Party for Democratic Action, an exclusively Muslim party. (In Bihać, the Muslims themselves have splintered, and another Muslim leader, the rebel Fikret Abdić, runs a parastate of his own from the town of Velika Kladuša.)

The Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia, which is the stronghold of Croatian agrarian fascism, is situated in the west of Bosnia. In March, 1994, under the firm guidance of Vice-President Al Gore, the Croats and the Muslims stopped fighting each other and created the Bosnian Federation, which is in theory an amalgamation of the Bosnian government and the Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia. Gore wanted a single constitutional unit to replace the Bosnian government and Herzeg-Bosnia, but Croat-Muslim rivalries have prevented that. Not only do these two parastates still exist but there are now two Presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Alija Izetbegović insists on being called the President of Bosnia, while Krešimir Žubak, a Croat, is officially the President of the Bosnian Federation.

"The only solution to this bloody mess," I was told by Braca Grubarčić, an old friend of mine from Belgrade, which is now the capital of Serbia, "is to get a huge iron and iron out the mountains, so there would be enough land to satisfy everyone. We'd have to lose most of the Adriatic Sea, but there's a price for everything."

"You're wrong," retorted Milan Cvetinović, a Bosnian Serb journalist who edited the only newspaper to be banned (apparently for investigating dubious business deals) in Karadžić's parastate. "You could take a country the size of Russia and there still wouldn't be enough territory for us, the Muslims, and the Croats."

A theory that has been advanced by many—that Serbs, Croats, and Muslims are doomed to engage for eternity in a Hobbesian conflict born of "ancient hatreds"—is preposterous. The ethnic



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peace that obtained during and after the Tito period—from 1945 until 1991—demonstrated that constitutional mechanisms can be found that are capable of neutralizing any latent hatred. Unfortunately, Titoism collapsed before a new mechanism was in place: parastates get their chance to carry out massacres and forced expulsions when one order collapses before another, more stable order emerges.

SARAJEVO, mainly controlled by the Bosnian government, is the quintessential capital of the new parastates. It is a long, spindly finger of a city. Heading west from the center, you drive along a wide boulevard from which you can observe the thinning hillside suburbs to the north and south. This road, known as Sniper Alley, is the finger's bone, and it eventually tapers off at Butmir Airport, beneath the imposing heights of Mt. Igman.

The high-rise buildings along Sniper Alley have injected new forms into the aesthetics of human-wrought destruction. On the western edge of the city, the isolated office block of the daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje* ("Liberation") is now a cone of melted concrete. At the other end of the alley, where the town center starts, the shattered mirror glass of the twin towers that served as the offices of UNIS—a metallurgical concern that was one of Sarajevo's largest business enterprises—creates a spectacular twinkling effect at sunrise and sunset.

Across from UNIS stands Bosnia's modern parliament building, now a partly gutted charcoal-colored ruin. Occasionally and inexplicably, at night two lone figures light a candle somewhere on the third floor of the debris, perhaps in the hope of luring a phoenix of the Bosnian constitution out of the ashes.

For a year, the city's battered trams have been limping along Sniper Alley on the one track in operation, but few in the Bosnian capital believe they will be running for much longer. Alongside the vehicles of the international agencies, the Bosnian police and those few citizens who still drive private automobiles dodge "breeze blocks"—fallen concrete slabs—and pedestrians.

The city is also suffering political decay. The S.D.A., the Party of Demo-

cratic Action, which disingenuously leaves the word "Muslim" out of its title, stretches into every institution: hospitals, factories, schools. The regime, despite the appalling retribution that the Bosnian people have suffered, is no more democratic than that of any of the parastates in the region. It enjoys international recognition, but when you have lost control of seventy per cent of the territory that you claim, international recognition doesn't mean much.

Under the auspices of the United Nations, the Bosnian government signed a cessation-of-hostilities agreement, brokered by Jimmy Carter, with the Bosnian Serbs on December 31, 1994, which was due to run till May 1st. Nevertheless, in February and March the gossip in Sarajevo began to concentrate on one topic alone—the forthcoming offensives. The Muslims were about to dig deep into their reservoir of cannon fodder and attempt some spectacular liberating activity. Press gangs were out on the city streets, snapping up young men to dig trenches.

In a darkened café, I listened as Emir, with a shaved head and a pronounced limp, fixed me with dull eyes and spoke in a monotone. A former soldier in the mostly Muslim Second Army Corps, he was pensioned in 1993, after much of one leg was blown off, but he maintains his connections with the Second Army leadership. "The plan is to attack on five fronts and stretch the Serbs' logistics to such a degree that their line will break, probably in north-central Bosnia," he told me. At a private briefing I attended in a dank cellar with a representative of the First Army Corps, a less likely plan was revealed. "We are going to punch a hole out of Sarajevo and begin with the liberation of our capital," an officer said. From a contact in the Interior Ministry came a different rumor: "Out of Tuzla, but not east—south, toward Goražde and the two other enclaves." The murmurs were no more than a carefully planned campaign of disinformation—an effort to disseminate as many scenarios as possible, so that the real campaign would come as a surprise.

In early March, Sarajevo television shifted gears into parastate overdrive, and over the next few weeks lengthy explanations of passages in the Koran were punctuated by sequences romanti-

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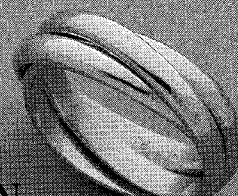
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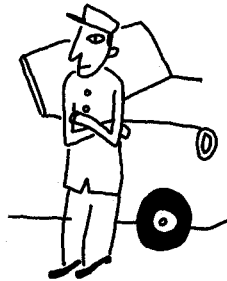
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cizing the preparations of the Bosnian-government Army for the spring offensive. Some chirpy conscripts were seen huddled together in a mountain bunker, cleaning their weapons, discussing tactics, and laughing about their slow-thinking opponents. Cut to a young conscript surrounded by a halo of Vaseline on the lens: in slow motion, he fired his handheld rocket launcher before turning to the camera with an orgasmic smile on his face and punching the air with his fist in a mock victory celebration. (Had it been the Serbs who were openly boasting about offensives under preparation, the massed ranks of the international media would be crying foul. But the response is muted when the Bosnian government trashes its solemn commitments to the international community.)

Then, on March 20th, the Muslims attacked Mt. Vlašić and the Majevica range. The latter juts out east of Tuzla, the second-largest city controlled by the Muslims. From Stolice, one of Majevica's peaks and the site of a television relay station, you can see the Drina River periodically widen into picturesque little lakes as it stretches southward. You can also see the towns of Zvornik, Bratunac, and Vlasenica. In the spring of 1992, all three cities had Muslim majorities. Then, after the international community so rashly recognized the parastate of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had no hope of surviving, the three cities became the targets of the longest-sustained and most hideous crimes perpetrated in the former Yugoslavia. From the relative safety of Sarajevo, Muslim leaders declared the independence of a state that they had no means of defending. These politicians had their international recognition and the accompanying pomp, but their necks were not on the line. It was their fellow-Muslims in eastern Bosnia who had to pay the price.

After reaching the safety of Zagreb, the Croatian capital, a worker from Bratunac named Ekrem Avdić told me of his ordeal: "On Sunday, May 10, 1992, there was shooting from all directions around Bratunac. Our Serb neighbors had occupied half the town. . . . They beat the baker, Fejzo Raskalj, endlessly. They killed him on Tuesday,

May 12th, and then they brought his brother to show him how they had killed Fejzo and how they would kill him in the same way. I know that among the guards were my neighbors, Bubo Živanović and Nikola, a waiter. They cursed our Turkish Muslim mothers and Alija"—Izetbegović. "On Monday, May 11th, they started to call our names, which they had on some lists. They picked out Izet Ahmić, the head of the M.B.O."—Muslim Bosniak Organization—"Safet Delić, and Hasan Ibrahimović. They beat the three of them, forcing them to carry the dead into the back of a station wagon and to clean the floor of blood. New prisoners



were being brought in the whole time. On Wednesday, they killed Izet and Hasan. Safet saved himself by hiding in the crowd. They brought in Medo Delić, my colleague, and his two sons. The younger son suffered from epilepsy. They started to hit them immediately, saying, 'What have you been doing until now?' Medo begged them not to hit his younger son, because of his illness. Bane"—one of the local Serbs—"immediately shot the younger son in the head and said, 'He's not going to be ill anymore!' Then he killed the older son and Medo. During the three nights that we were in the room, they killed several hundred people. Those who had been beaten up were taken out, thrown into a dumpster, and burned alive. They then placed the dumpster under our window. The bodies were transported by van and lorry and then thrown into the Drina."

On the far bank of the Drina lies Serbia. Once the international community had approved the detaching of Bosnia from Yugoslavia, the Muslims of the Drina valley were finished. Neither the Serbs of Bosnia nor those of Serbia will consider giving up this strategically vital strip of land.

THE other great regional parastate, the so-called Serb Republic, has its capital less than a dozen miles from Sarajevo, in the meadowy suburb of Pale. Before the war, Pale was a village ski resort with six or seven thousand permanent residents—Serbs and Muslims. Now, three years later, it has ex-

panded into a town of an estimated fourteen thousand—all Serbs. Today, there are no guests—just redundant hosts. Pale is a beautiful but permanently out-of-season tourist center. Silent teen-agers drift listlessly around the few cafés, playing pool until the establishments close, in the early evening. Women and old men occupy themselves perfunctorily with the Bosnian Serbs' central economic activity: selling cigarettes by the side of the road. These years of indolence in Pale have been accompanied by some of the fiercest fighting in the war—in Sarajevo. Yet Pale is going stir-crazy with boredom and isolation.

The only excitement is in the House of Culture, a little shoebox on the main drag which is home to Serbian television—a powerful branch on the otherwise sickly tree of Bosnian Serb propaganda. This particular evening—April 7, 1995—panic has seized the overwrought technicians and journalists stuffed tightly in the building. It is barely three weeks since Mt. Vlašić and the Majevica range came under ferocious attack by the armed forces of the Bosnian government. Both are sites of television relay stations. With ten minutes to go before the main evening news, the television and telephone lines to Banja Luka, the Bosnian Serbs' principle city in the north, are down. The face of Dragan Božanić, the presenter cum producer cum editor, is grim. Like CNN, Serbian television uses a split screen—one anchorman in Pale, another in Banja Luka. "We can't go on the air without the split screen," Božanić says. Serbian viewers would immediately assume that one or both of the relay stations had been taken by the Bosnian government—and the Serbs are not accustomed to the damaging psychological impact of military defeat.

Although the Bosnian Serb Army has inflicted a serious defeat on the Muslim forces at Majevica, the relay station on Vlašić has fallen to the Muslims, and the Serbs have not yet admitted this. With two minutes to go, the Serbian television workers are the grateful recipients of a miracle: thanks to the Majevica relay, the lines come back up.

The news this evening leads off with the first of regular monthly press conferences to be held by Dr. Karadžić, the

leader of the Bosnian Serbs. We see him strolling confidently into a room to stand under the crossed flags of the Bosnian Serbs' parastate. His bouffant hairdo and similarly puffy words—he is a poet and a psychiatrist as well as a despot—can be examined by viewers in a variety of states and statelets, even though the television station's footprint covers a region smaller than Maine.

Monitoring Karadžić's appearances is de rigueur for the besieged people of Sarajevo. Since they have no possibility of defeating his forces militarily, and are at the mercy of Serb shells and snipers, their sole consolation is to laugh at the paraleader's outrageous pomposity. This quality has been accentuated of late, because, like everyone else in Pale, Karadžić and the other Bosnian Serb leaders are wild with boredom. Having rejected the latest international peace plan, proposed last summer, they have been shunned by the representatives of the United States, Germany, Britain, France, and Russia. Even Karadžić's former ally Milošević, in Belgrade, has cut commercial and political links with Pale.

Gone are the days when Karadžić's Presidential entourage would sweep into the parastate's lakeside villa in Geneva. The endless televised negotiations with important people at the Palais des Nations are but a dreamy memory. If Karadžić should be indicted by the U.N. war-crimes tribunal, he could be arrested if he left Serb territory. The best he can hope for is an occasional swing up to Banja Luka, but there he has far fewer friends among the Bosnian Serbs than he has in Pale. For the most part, he spends his time contemplating his local might in the rarefied atmosphere of the hotel networks built for the tourists and spectators of 1984. So, to the delight of the Sarajevo viewers, he compensates for his isolation by becoming ever more majestic in his Presidential performances. The more flags, the more solemnity, and the more circumstance, the more intense the ridicule.

The siege of Sarajevo is an anomaly of this war. It is of little strategic relevance to the Serbs and diverts considerable military resources that could be deployed elsewhere. The siege is in fact Karadžić's private obsession. Ismet Cerić, his former boss at Sarajevo's re-

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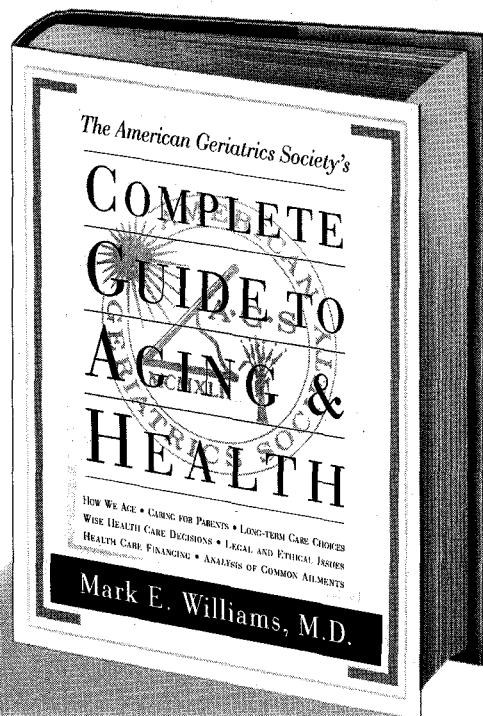
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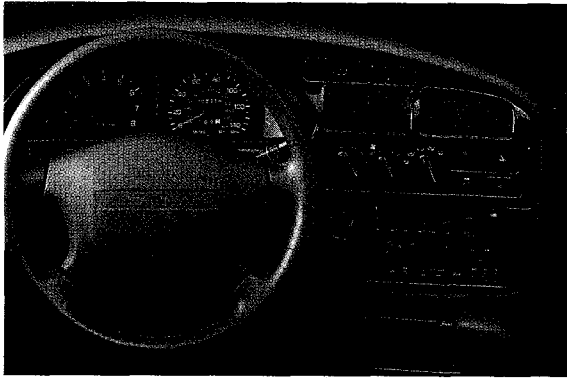
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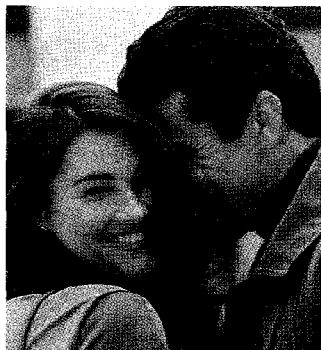
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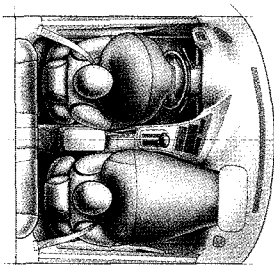


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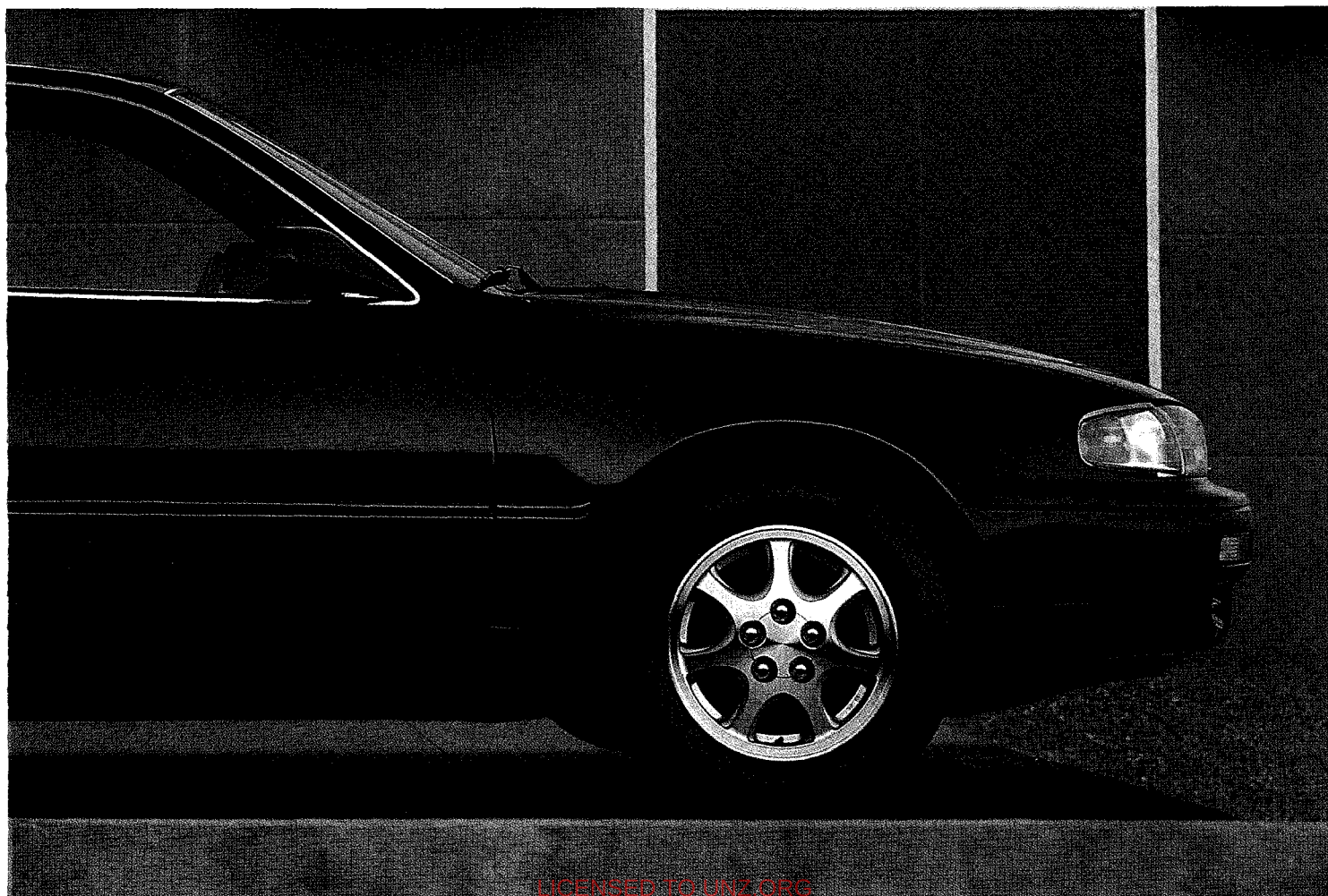


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"I'm hanging in there, but I think Edgar is down to his last marble."

nowned psychiatric clinic, where Karadžić worked as a senior psychologist, said recently, "Radovan was never satisfied with what he had. He always believed that certain forces were preventing him from attaining his ambition." In fact, his greatest failure—his failure as a poet—has been ascribed by most publishers and writers to his signal lack of talent. "Radovan blames Sarajevo, the city, for all that," Cerić concluded.

Fifty yards away from the Sarajevo city center is Grbavica, the main residential district of a novel urban entity called Serbian Sarajevo. Here attitudes toward Karadžić's television appearances are altogether more respectful. Since the shooting of two small girls by a Bosnian-government soldier in early March, this most battered and traumatized part of Serb territory in Bosnia is only too ready to express the anger that Karadžić encourages. To mark the fortieth day since these nasty killings, the perplexed little faces of the victims, Milica Lalović and Nataša Ućur, stare out from Pale's daily newspaper. Although hundreds of thousands of Serb civilians have suffered in the wars of Yugoslav secession, the Serbs of Grbavica suffer alone when one of their own dies: because the outside world perceives their leaders to be the main—

indeed, the sole—instigators of these conflicts, there is little international sympathy for the individual misery of Serbs.

ECONOMIC life is entirely unpredictable in the Serb Republic. The decision, last August, by Serbia's President Milošević to impose a commercial blockade on the Bosnian Serbs in order to pressure Karadžić into accepting the international peace plan has led to the gradual freezing of economic life and to savage internecine struggles among the élite.

There have been two overlapping foci of these battles: one is a town, Bijeljina, and the other is Karadžić's powerful police force. Bijeljina snuggles up to the border with Serbia, in northeast Bosnia, and it is the clearing house through which all goods smuggled in from Serbia are processed. Anything can be bought or sold in Bijeljina, and as a result the town enjoys a prosperity absent almost anywhere else in Serbian-held territory. Every second house in Bijeljina has a sign outside advertising gasoline and diesel fuel at two and a half Deutsche marks (\$1.80) a litre, which is fractionally more expensive than in Belgrade. By the time fuel reaches Pale, a mere two and a half hours' drive away, the price has doubled.

Until the blockade was imposed, the bulk of the wages and pensions paid to the Bosnian Serb police force was financed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Serbia. When these funds were frozen by the blockade, Karadžić replaced the mayor and the police chief of Bijeljina with his own people, and assumed control of Centreks—a firm, based near Pale, that has a monopoly on the import of cigarettes and oil, the two goods a Balkan parastate must secure in order to survive. The revenues from this trade are being used to pay off some Pale politicians and to put the police force squarely in Karadžić's pocket, since his trust in the Bosnian Serb Army is less than complete.

A quaint little political struggle, really, but it is accompanied by betrayals, mysterious deaths, and shoot-outs. (To confuse things further, two weeks ago

members of the police and the Army were involved in a remake of "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" in the town of Zvornik.) Greed is a huge factor: in all the parastates, ideology has been dispensed with in favor of money. Small oligarchies masquerading as popular tribunes are busy stuffing their pockets with lucre, placing their relatives in diplomatic sinecures abroad, or creating private armies for a final showdown.

The Serb Republic is also hemorrhaging citizens. Of the 1.4 million Serbs registered in the 1991 census of Bosnia, roughly two hundred thousand, many of them in Sarajevo, live in areas held by the Muslim Bosnian government. An estimated three hundred and fifty thousand have fled the territory and live as refugees inside Serbia proper or in other countries, and another fifty thousand, mainly young people, are currently awaiting the outcome of their visa applications in order to emigrate. Most of them hope to travel to Canada.

This parastate depends not on its people but on its heavy-artillery stocks. Above all, it depends on its officer class, whose professionalism far outstrips that of its Bosnian-government equivalent. Every time the Muslim-dominated Bosnian-government Army attempts a

serious offensive, it is only a matter of weeks before its blighted soldiers fall into a trap, laid with exquisite precision by Serb officers. Despite the regular losses, the Muslims keep coming back.

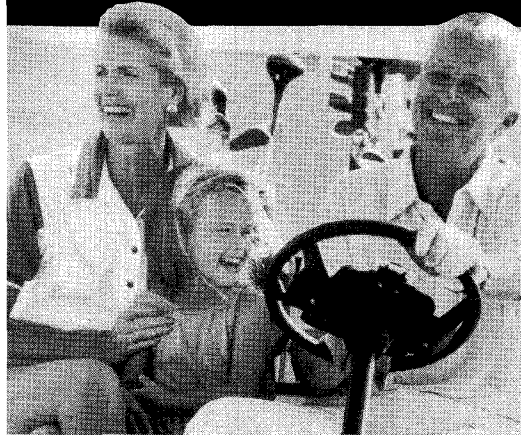
THE closer you get to the fighting on Majevica, the more the vibrations of artillery fire grind not in your ears but in your stomach. On April 8th, sleet and torrential rain curiously augment the unbending resolution on the faces of the Serb infantry and logistics companies moving up and down the hill. It has been only two days since these Serb forces ran through the blockade that the Bosnian government imposed on the television relay station. A company commander, with gray hair slicked neatly back behind his ears, raises a glass of pear brandy to me. His voice is quiet. "They must be punished for this offensive," he says, referring to the Muslims. "We are going to show them that they cannot break ceasefire agreements unilaterally and expect to get away with it. We have regained the ground we lost, and now we will push on to Tuzla."

These words could well be interpreted as a death sentence on the pathetic villagers caught between Majevica and Tuzla. And, indeed, five days later news reports from the region say that the Muslim peasants are beginning to flee as the Bosnian Serb Army accelerates an enormous buildup of hardware to the north and south of Majevica.

Neither the Serbs nor the Muslims nor the Croats are strong enough to win this war. Nor are any of them weak enough to lose it. The parastates are again preparing for battle. Clearly, no parastate can achieve final victory unless it persuades its reluctant patrons to invest substantial political and military capital in its dubious endeavor. For the Bosnian Serbs, this means Serbia itself and, in the distant future, Russia. For the Muslims, it means Croatia, that fickle friend, and the United States, a country that is being slowly lured into the quagmire. A parastate has a right to demand its patrons' support, since the patrons bear considerable responsibility for its nightmarish existence in Europe's twilight zone. But if the patrons yield to the demands, the war will almost certainly spread throughout southeastern Europe. ♦

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PERSONAL HISTORY

GROWING UP FASHIONABLE

Tatiana Liberman was a Russian émigrée who became one of New York society's most striking style icons. What was it like to live in the world of a woman who created herself? The author, Tatiana's daughter, remembers.

BY FRANCINE DU PLESSIX GRAY

MY mother enjoyed claiming direct descent from Genghis Khan. Having asserted that an eighth of her blood was Tatar and only seven-eighths of it "ordinary Russian," she would go on to drop a few names in the chronology of our lineage: Kublai Khan, Tamerlane, and the great Mogul monarch Babur, from whose favorite Kirghiz concubine my great-grandmother was descended. And *voilà*—our ancestry was established.

Tatiana du Plessix Liberman could have set all human history on its head and you wouldn't have dared argue with her. In her prime, she was five feet nine and a half inches tall and a hundred and forty pounds. The majesty of her presence, the very nearsighted, chestnut-hued, indeed Asian eyes that fixed you with a brutally critical gaze through blue-tinted bifocals had the psychic impact of a can of Mace. Her alleged kinship to the great Khan was symbolically fitting: draped in shawls and adorned with blazing costume jewelry that recalled insignias of archaic cults, she strode into a room like a tribal war goddess, and she moved through life with a speed and fierceness that recalled the howling wind of the steppes. Tatiana was a force of nature—one of the most dazzling self-inventions of her time—and we who loved her may remain under her spell until the day we die.

By profession, my mother was a designer of hats, and, for twenty-three years, she had her own custom-design salon at Saks Fifth Avenue, where she instructed thousands of women on how to lure their men, keep their husbands, and enchant their luncheon companions through the proper tilt of a beret or the sly positioning of a little black dotted veil. "Tatiana of Saks" was hailed by the *Herald Tribune* as "the 'milliner's milliner,'" and was perhaps best known for her ethereal spring hats: casques of pastel-shaded veiling; leafy pillows of tulle speckled with violets;

turbans of frothy gauze swirled beehive style; bonnets of silk surah displaying bundles of silk roses underneath their rolled brims.

Though Tatiana was one of a handful of professional women who were looked on as New York's most commanding fashion presences—others were the editor Diana Vreeland, the designer Valentina, and Hattie Carnegie's designer Pauline Potter (later Pauline de Rothschild)—she herself did not abide by the seasonal caprices of haute couture. Soon after arriving in the United States, in 1941, she hit upon a uniform, and she stuck to it for the next half century: she wore black, except in summer or at balls; she wore tunics, of wool or linen by day, of satin or velvet at night; and the skirts she reluctantly wore to work were switched for slacks the second she got home. She kept her hair tinted a dark-golden blond, parted on the side, and simply rolled. Her eyebrows—plucked and archly lined with a light-brown pencil—and her ruby-red nails and vampishly drawn mouth, tinted with Arden's Rose Aurora, remained equally unchanged. Yet no canon of fashion did she transgress more violently than Diana Vreeland's decree "Elegance is refusal." One might say that Tatiana perfected the art of too-muchness: the great hunks of fake jewelry she flung on herself included eight-inch-wide imitations of pre-Columbian breastplates, four-inch stretches of rhinestone bracelets, candelabras of paste earrings, and—her most famous logo—a massive ring of quasi-rubies (garnets, actually, I later learned) resembling the top of a bishop's crosier.

Elegance is in fact a matter of consistency; and Tatiana's gestures, her speech, her entire manner were absolutely in line with the maximalism of her getup. She was brazen, brusque, intolerant, blatantly élitist, prodigally generous, and as categorical in her tastes as a Soviet commis-

sar. She did not converse but proclaimed, and many of her decrees had to do with deriding conventional symbols of affluence. "Diamonds are for suburbs," she said, and "Meenik is for football." Tatiana took such pride in a forty-five-dollar set of Macy's garden furniture with which she equipped our first little New York rooms, on Central Park South, that it followed her wherever she lived for almost fifty years. In the sixties, when her fortunes had risen considerably, she furnished her entire weekend house in Connecticut for a thousand dollars, with white plastic furniture from Bon Marché. ("Plastic ees forever.") She probably owned fewer couture clothes than any other fashion personality in New York, copying all her tunics, over the years, from a few originals of Dior's and, later, of Saint Laurent's, which had been gifts from the designers.

The world had to come to Tatiana; she made very few steps toward it, particularly toward the United States. At the time of her death, in 1991, she was still getting her news from French periodicals and New York's Russian-language newspaper *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*. The faux pas she made in English were epic: she once went to F. A. O. Schwarz, flanked by my eight- and ten-year-old sons, and announced to the salesman, "I want to buy kike." "Kite, Grandma, kite," the children pleaded. "I want kike!" she insisted. She had a Nietzschean faith in success ("One does not argue with winners") and cultivated an old-fashioned brand of Russian élitism, in part corny and in part humanistic; it was indifferent to money and geared instead to pedigree and public achievement. The penniless Soviet émigré Joseph Brodsky, whose Nobel Prize she predicted nearly two decades before he received it—and within an hour of meeting him—was perhaps the most glorious star in her firmament.

How paradoxical she was! Tatiana was the only mother I can remember of any student in my class with a full-time job, yet she was militantly opposed to women entering the professions, because she believed that “women’s brains are smaller than men’s,” and she was appalled by anyone’s going to a woman doctor or lawyer. Like most members of the Russian gentry, she was intensely puritanical, unable to discuss sex even with her closest friends; she never underwent a gynecological exami-

and loved ones. Arriving at a beach on the first day of vacation—she was a sun worshipper and a crack swimmer—she would walk ahead of us very fast, her slender arms clanging with tribal gold, and examine the quality of the sand, the clarity of the water, the status of the population. Then she would holler to her group, “*Venez ici tout de suite! C’est le seul endroit!*” (“Come here at once! This is the only spot!”) And we would all troop along, knowing that she was usually right, and

ten quipped about that picture, pointing to the lavish Parisian dress.) Tatiana Iacovleva was born in St. Petersburg but brought up in Penza, a district capital some three hundred miles southeast of Moscow. She came from a family of intellectuals who displayed that craving for French culture and luxuries from which few upper-class Russians were exempt. Living with her mother and sister in one room of their boarded-up house, she barely survived the Revolution and the



Tatiana, photographed by Irving Penn in 1952, wearing her trademark costume ring. “Diamonds are for suburbs,” she decreed.

nation after the day I was born. But she grabbed attention by making some of the lewdest remarks in New York society. “What kind of orgasm she has?” she inquired of a friend who had brought a dewy-eyed new girlfriend to one of her cocktail parties. “Vaginal or clitoral?” “Put logs in fireplace,” she commanded my future husband the first time she came to his Connecticut house. “Fireplace without logs is like man without erection.”

It was part of Mother’s dictatorial largesse that she wanted to impose her enthusiasms and preferences on her friends

fearing that if we didn’t follow her orders the arrival of a busload of noisy nudists would subject us to her derisive “I told you so.” Yet beneath Tatiana’s despotic manner and her exhibitionism was hidden a deeply private, self-demeaning child-woman, whose complex character was forged in the terror of the Russian Revolution.

I HAVE photographs that show my mother in the Russia of 1912. She is six, an assertive tot with long blond curls and dressed in a Paquin frock. (“Now you know why there was revolution,” she of-

great famine that swept parts of Russia in the early nineteen-twenties. Although she had only a year of traditional schooling, she had a gift for memorizing poetry, a talent she retained throughout her life. Able to declaim by heart hundreds of lines of Lermontov, Pushkin, Blok, Yesenin, and Akhmatova, she helped feed her family by standing on street corners and accepting hunks of bread from Soviet soldiers in exchange for her verses.

In 1925, Tatiana was found to be tubercular, and relatives who had already fled to France managed to get her to

Paris. She arrived there at the age of nineteen—a gorgeous, unwashed savage, as one of her kin described her—and lost no time in announcing her craving for the best clothes, invitations to the most brilliant parties and literary salons, and (a particularly Russian fixation) a title of nobility.

Within four years, she had achieved her goals: she acquired legendary status through the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, then a frequent visitor to Paris, who fell insanely in love with her, dedicated some of his finest late poems to her, and vainly tried to bring her back to the casteless anarchy of the Russia she had fled. Instead, she married, in 1929, my father-to-be, Bertrand du Plessix, a diplomat and the dashing youngest son of an impoverished French viscount. By that time, Tatiana had been to art school briefly and had studied with an Armenian-émigrée milliner, mastering the profession that would sustain her for the next forty years. (Among the exiles who have fled great historical upheavals, the milliner's trade has always been looked on as one of women's most honorable occupations. After the Revolution of 1789, many French expatriates supported their families by making hats in cottage-industry settings, where duchesses might find themselves working in fifty-woman ateliers.)

There was a brief hiatus in Mother's hatmaking career, for the first two years of my parents' marriage were spent *en poste* at the French Embassy in Warsaw, where I was born. There Tatiana learned the intricacies of diplomatic protocol—"the papal nuncio *always* at the hostess's right," she would instruct me. But, however much she enjoyed this hierarchic folderol, Tatiana loathed living away from Paris, which remained for her the center of world civilization, and she particularly hated Warsaw. She forced my father to abandon the diplomatic corps, and it was a move he never recovered from, avenging his botched career through rage and innumerable liaisons.

Back in Paris, I was left totally in the care of my possessive father and a tyrannical governess while Tatiana attended swank parties—with a variety of aspiring but inevitably rejected lovers—at which she could recruit new clients. She opened her own salon in our Paris flat, where she received clients in her bedroom, hurriedly making up the beige damask cover of her sofa bed upon rising, so that she could start welcoming the ladies by ten.

And that is how I first remember Mother: seated at the dressing table, brushing her marcelled dark-golden hair. The tabletop displays a fourteen-piece set of sterling-silver brushes and bottles, each engraved with the crest of my father's family and my mother's initials, T.I.P. I crouch on a little stool in a corner of the bedroom (I am between six and nine now), terrified that any movement will

trigger her annoyance and my dismissal. The silence she maintains with me is all the more wounding because with the rest of the world she is loquacious and exuberant, the life of the party. I've heard a story about her climbing on a table in a very crowded bistro and walking the length of the room, from table to table, to join her friends at its far end. Mother the magical table-walker—this is part of the legend I



Tat's hats: Tatiana with a model in her workroom at Saks's Salon Moderne; drawing (right) of a Tatiana spring cocked hat that was featured on the cover of Vogue in 1945. "I listen to problems and solve by putting flowers on heads," she said.





ILLUSTRATION BY RUBIN ALTERIA

weave about her. And as I crouch in the corner she blows me a few kisses with her fingers. There is only one phrase I remember her speaking to me, "*Tu es très jolie ce matin,*" and throughout my childhood I wondered whether she would have found me less boring if I'd been more *jolie*.

Once she is dressed, I follow her like a puppy to a small chamber off her bed-

room, where she crafts her hats with the aid of an assistant, a melancholy, round-faced émigrée with the difficult name of Nadezhda Romanovna Preobrazhenska. Nadezhda Romanovna, whose husband works as a taxi-driver, often kisses and hugs me during bouts of émigrée tears: "Ah, the beloved country we left behind, the dachas and the meadows and our own staff of servants, and now

reduced to this, *dushenka!*" She sits at one end of the table, which is heaped high with rolls of felt, tulle, and lamé; with spools of grosgrain and satin ribbons; with aigrettes and peacock feathers and pink cloth roses—the whole heap surmounted by the large round steam press that will force felt and straw to take on the shapes of bretons, casques, or berets. At the other end of the table,

Mother sits in front of a large oval mirror again, sculpting velours, draping organza or satin onto her head. She never sketches her hats, but uses her own reflected head eight hours a day, three hundred days a year, as the medium of creation. Mirrors were the central metaphor of her life.

Throughout the day, in between my lessons (at my eccentric father's wish, I do not go to a regular school but am tutored at home by my governess), I spy on my idol, peeking through the keyhole of her fitting room as she holds a bunch of globe-domed pins in her mouth, adjusting models of jerseys and moirés to the head of the Baronne de Rosières or the Duchesse de Gramont.

In the evenings after she has departed on yet another client-hunting trek in the haut monde, I seek Mother in her closets, studying her cashmeres and velvets and silks, most of them given to her by the designer Robert Piguet. I recall feeling an exquisite sensation—as close to masturbation as anything I can remember from childhood—while stroking a particular Piguet evening dress of electric-blue satin,

which carried the scent of his dry, terse perfume, Bandit. The texture offered a powerful sensual consolation, as if the cloth that had lain against Mother's skin were the equivalent of her longed-for embrace.

THEN came the war, and my father's death in the first months of fighting with the Free French, and our flight to America. Mother got her first job three days after we arrived in New York, in January of 1941, through friends of a fellow Russian émigré who had married an American heiress. It was arranged that, for seventy-five dollars a week, Tatiana would design hats at Henri Bendel's, which was particularly renowned for the excellence of its hats, as attested by Cole Porter's "You're the top! . . . You're a Bendel bonnet, A Shakespeare sonnet." At Bendel's, Mother was known as Countess du Plessix. (The P.R. gambit of popularizing European titles seemed to suit the taste of wartime New York; witness Countess Mara shirts and ties and Princess Marcella Borghese cosmetics.) Hats were big business then—one of *Vogue's* fashion editors during the

forties and fifties, Babs Simpson, estimates that she and her colleagues acquired a minimum of ten new hats each a season, giving the previous year's bunch to their maids—so Tatiana was in great demand.

A year after she started at Bendel's, her designs came to the attention of Saks Fifth Avenue's founder and president, Adam Gimbel. In the forties and fifties, no center for custom-made clothes in Manhattan—with the exception of Bergdorf Goodman—more epitomized American high style than the glamorous Salon Moderne, on the third floor of Saks. A suite of rooms walled with Louis XV boiserie and pale-blue damask, it was dedicated to custom-made women's fashions and directed by a willowy blond designer known as Sophie of Saks, who was Gimbel's wife. Throughout the thirties, the Salon Moderne had been a showcase for Paris imports, but, with the cessation of trade imposed by wartime, Sophie started to design a line of her own, and was having trouble giving it the proper cachet. Both she and her husband were entranced by Tatiana's European flair, and in 1942 Gimbel offered Tatiana a job making hats for the Salon, at a salary of a hundred and twenty-five dollars a week. "Don't ever learn English, you'll sell more hats that way," Gimbel told Mother, and she would more than amply follow his advice.

Within a few years, Sophie's only competitors in American made-to-order clothes were Mainbocher and Hattie Carnegie, and Tatiana's principal rivals were Lily Daché and John Fredericks. Sophie and Tatiana's customers included stars like Claudette Colbert, Marlene Dietrich, Irene Dunne, and Edith Piaf; the socialites Mrs. E. F. Hutton and Mrs. Pierre du Pont; assorted magnates like Estée Lauder, Betsy Bloomingdale, Mrs. Darryl Zanuck, Harriet Deutsch (an heiress to the Sears, Roebuck fortune), and Anita May (a great-granddaughter of the founder of the May Company).

Texas-born Sophie was a perennially cheerful woman whose fashion philosophy was somewhat like Tatiana's: to make a woman look as sexy as possible and yet like a perfect lady. She was particularly noted for the superb tailoring of her suits and coats, always made with matching blouses and linings, and for the lush fabrics of her evening dresses. Tatiana's creations added a dash of spryness and wit to Sophie's traditional, *comme-il-faut* elegance. (A typical touch of her whimsy



"Are you through with your 'Times'?"

MAN WAKING

The room was already light when
he awoke, and his body curled
like a grub suddenly exposed
when something dislodges a stone.
Work. He was more than an hour
late. Let that pass, he thought.
He pulled the covers over his head.
The smell of his skin and hair
offended him. Now he drew his legs
up a little more, and sent
his forehead down to meet his knees.
His knees felt cool.
A surprising amount of light
came through the blanket. He could
easily see his hand. Not dark enough,
not the utter darkness he desired.

—JANE KENYON

was to put a thermometer or a tiny revolving weather vane on a winter hat in place of a feather.) And after a long week of working side by side the two women played cards together every weekend. "The three of us lunched every day in Sophie's office," says Helen O'Hagan, the former vice-president of public relations at Saks Fifth Avenue, who joined the store in 1955 as an assistant press officer. "Both Sophie and Tats loved to talk, but Tatiana had to remain the center of attention. She carried on about whom she'd met at dinner parties that week, and then the two would discuss their canasta game for the following Saturday and Sunday. When Tatiana had hogged the stage a bit too long, Sophie would lean over and poke her knee and say, 'Tats, enough! Let someone else speak.' And, of course, Tatiana always sat facing the door, so that she could quickly jump up and catch any customer who wandered into the Salon at lunchtime."

Tatiana the Dictator allowed no fidgeting or perusing of models: she immediately imposed her preference, and that was that. "Tatiana simply brought something out and said, 'Thees ees hat for you,'" Ethel Woodward de Croisset, a Parisian who frequented the Salon Moderne in the mid-forties, says. "And then she put it on your head and made a loud one-word comment in French, such as '*Formidable!*' or '*Divin!*' " But my mother's success was based on cultural and social skills that far transcended her

craft as a designer. Her stint in the diplomatic service had enabled her to master a code that was still central to mid-century elegance—the appropriateness of each chapeau for a particular social occasion. And she was a gifted lay psychiatrist: she was able to convince plain women that they were beautiful. "I listen to problems and solve by putting flowers on heads," she used to say about her customers. "They parade out of salon full of confidence, like prize racehorses."

BY the time Tatiana had become Saks's star milliner, I was settled at the Spence School, in New York, one of the few foreigners and scholarship students there, shrouding my anxieties under the mask of the successful, outgoing girl. The war, my father's death, and my deliverance from the governess had literally thrust my mother and me into each other's arms, and as I was approaching puberty I came to sense the great shyness that lurked under her noisy, tyrannical façade. Although I was not yet ready to forgive her failings, I was beginning to realize that she had been too ambitious, too deeply involved in her climb to success, to "mother" me properly when I was a small child. But nothing brought us closer together than her marriage to Alexander Liberman, a fellow Russian émigré, whom Mother had first met decades earlier in France. He became the guardian angel of my youth, blending paternal and maternal roles and perform-

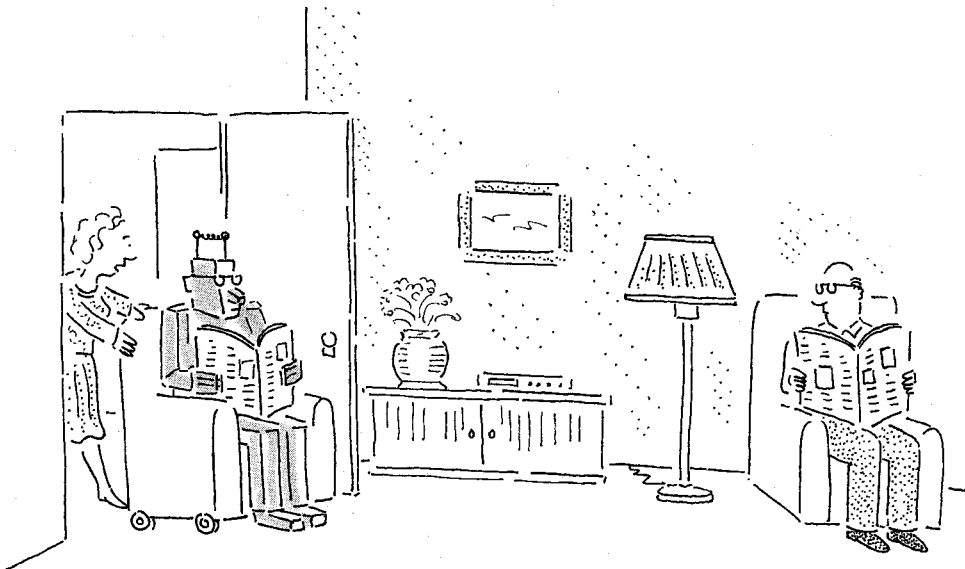
ing the duties that Mother was too impatient or bored to undertake. He dealt with report cards and dentists, imposed curfew hours and taboos on lipstick, and, later, warned me of the dangers of adolescent sex and informed me about the mysteries of birth control.

Mother's love for Alex, whom she called Superman, was of a mystical, obsessive kind, and he was entirely devoted to her. His first job in the United States was a modest post in the layout department of *Vogue*, and although he eventually became editorial director of the entire Condé Nast publishing empire, he is the first to emphasize that in our early years in the United States my mother was the family's principal breadwinner.

The Libermans' swift rise in New York's fashion and media worlds was made possible by their ever shrewd choices of who might be "useful" to them, and by their hospitality, which came to be proverbial. At our first Christmases, when we were barely able to pay grocers' bills, they gave huge parties—forty, fifty people squeezed into our flat—at which everyone received a small but beautifully wrapped gift. Friends of friends were welcome. There was food enough for hundreds, and music—a wheezing Russian fellow called Zizi perpetually playing the march from Prokofiev's "The Love for Three Oranges" on our rented upright.

HOWEVER opulent the customers of the Salon Moderne, my mother's workroom at Saks was akin to a Dickensian sweatshop. It was a dark, low-ceilinged space with little cross-ventilation. At two long worktables sat some twelve seamstresses. Tatiana had to produce sixty models a year—thirty for the spring collection, thirty for the fall—and the atmosphere of her atelier was made electric by her concentration and her speed of execution. But somehow it was also serene. She was thoughtful with her assistants, sending them home when they were getting a cold or had child-care problems; they were awed and endlessly amused by her. My most striking memory of Mother at work has to do with the uncanny swiftness of her fingers. Her right hand was crippled and clawlike—the result of a nearly fatal car accident in 1936—but it flew over the cloth, sculpting the most delicate pleats, flutings, and tucks with the deftness of a microsurgeon.

It was from this corner of Saks that



MANKOFF

"Don't panic. It's only a prototype."

Tatiana went out to wage a battle familiar to all mothers: the struggle over her daughter's adolescent body. Mother's comments on my changing shape were biased by the numerous hangups she had about her own body, particularly about her breasts, which had been direly misshapen—or so she repeatedly told me—by nine months of nursing me. ("What else could I do, in *Warsaw*?") From my thirteenth year on, her sartorial commandments went something like this: "You and I can't wear belts, *chérie*, our breasts are too big. We can't wear red shoes, our feet are too wide." Such scrutiny reached a critical point at those moments, both longed-for and dreaded, when we had to shop for my clothes, which we bought exclusively at Saks, where Mother had a large discount.

When I was a freshman, my school suggested that each member of my class acquire a long evening frock for the initiation into East Coast-preppy puberty—the Groton-St. Mark's Christmas dance. As I arrive at Saks to meet Mother, I have already created the dress of my dreams, pink or blue, a tulle skirt perhaps scattered with a few paillettes. Leaving orders with her assistants that she be instantly paged if a customer should appear, Mother clutches my hand and pulls me down the grim gray service stairs toward the Junior Misses department. "Psst! Psst!" she goes as we emerge. "Salesgirl! Queeck!" She is known throughout the store, and help instantly appears. "She must have dress for evening, long, black!" she commands.

"But *Maman*, I don't want black," I gasp. "*Ridicule!*" she answers. "Black is *only* color for evening." "But *Maman*—" She is already at the rack, going speedily through the garments, pushing back dresses that I crave, crave to try on—but, alas, Mother is triumphantly holding up her definitive choice. It minimizes the bosom, all right—bodice of stark black velvet, sad little skirt of black-and-white plaid organdie, with cap sleeves to match. It is *mannish*; it is *nunnish*—in sum, it's a lemon. "*On essaye!*" she orders. She rushes me into a dressing room, and as she exclaims "*Quelle élégance! Divin! Un rêve!*" I stare at myself dejectedly in the mirror. I plead, "*Maman*, can't I try the—" "*Ça y est*, again you want to try on the whole store!" She is off, black-and-white monstrosity in hand, and I pliantly acquiesce, for her love has been so hard won that I fear the smallest confrontation could destroy it. Over time, I have often thought back to my mother's imposition of her own blackness on my first evening frock: Was she refusing me my femininity, because she didn't want my childhood to end? Was she denying my sexuality, because it made me into a rival? Or was she, on the contrary, speeding me into adulthood, into a sexual elegance akin to hers?

I DID not menstruate until I was sixteen. My classmates, one after another, began to host the "visitor," as we called it at Spence, while I played a delicate make-believe game, every four weeks dropping

the excuse card into the little black box in the gym, expertly chatting about cramps. I had no one with whom to share my dreadful secret. Mother had never approached the issue, and my stepfather had offered some vague information, but I could not bring myself to tell him my worries—worries that I could never have children, was doomed to be barren and useless to society. And then one day, in my junior year, my period arrived, directly after basketball practice. I rushed home to the little brownstone on East Seventieth Street that we had been sharing with another Russian family. I ran into my bathroom, pulled down my pants, and sat on the toilet, admiring the streak of pink. Mother came in from Saks and opened the bathroom door, staring at me, as she did most days upon returning from work, with that shy, inquisitive glance which was meant to ask, "Is everything O.K.?" "*Maman*, I have my period!" I exclaimed. But I don't know how to handle it, I added, explaining that most of the girls used pads, some used tampons, but that idea kind of scared me. Do you, have you ever used tampons, is that what I should try to use? She stared at me, deadpan, and said, "Oh, sure, I can put anything up there—tennis balls, anything!" And then she fled the bathroom, terror in her eyes.

By now I was a precociously literary, symbol-savvy teen-ager. What was that business about "balls"? Men had balls; was she trying to tell me how many men could get in there, or that she was the one in the family who had the balls? Or was she trying to prove how "progressive" she was, liberating me to accept my sexuality forthrightly and have fewer problems with it than she had? (If so, she succeeded.)

It was around this time that Mother bought me my first pair of trousers. She had always looked upon herself as "emancipated," because she had started wearing pants in the twenties, and her idea of the chicly liberated woman was frozen around the notion that "she wears pants." So, as I stood in the dressing room trying on my first pair of slacks, Mother stared at me with that gaze of unmitigated adoration which it was my highest goal in life to gain, and said, "*Divin! Tu dois toujours porter les pantalons!*" She carried on about my skinny hips, so much more elegant than her size 16—why ever bother with a

skirt? For the next half century, "You must always wear pants" was Mother's repeated refrain—her version of the mantra with which every mother attempts to keep her daughter in her control, be it "You're killing me," "I won't argue anymore," or the aria in the second act of "The Magic Flute" through which (as I see it) the Queen of the Night tries to keep her daughter Pamina under her spell.

But we did have some good times, Mother and I. The best moments came when I was on school vacation, and picked her up at Saks to go to lunch at the Hamburg Heaven on Fifty-first Street, across from St. Patrick's. "Twenty-five minutes!" she would proclaim as we rushed down the service stairs. We sat on the childlike high chairs and winked at each other conspiratorially as the waitresses snapped the little trays over our knees. Food was very important to Mother, and, unlike most fashion plates, she was not much concerned about remaining svelte. We both ordered our hamburgers extra rare, and lathered them with the wonderful American junk—pickles, ketchup—that still symbolized the paradise of our adopted country, topping it all off with lemon-meringue pie. I tried to stretch out our time to forty, forty-five minutes by questioning her about who was coming for fittings that afternoon. Very important, she'd answer, looking at her watch. Marlene and Claudette! We never discussed school, for she always feared that such talk would reveal her ignorance of educational matters, and though I went to Spence for seven years, she never visited the school until my graduation day.

"THE attachment to the mother is bound to perish, precisely because it was the first and was so intense," Sigmund Freud wrote about daughters and mothers. Freud never did give us girls much of a chance to bond. His writings on this issue, however, have helped me to realize that the complexity of daughters' struggles for independence from their mothers is especially byzantine. A boy achieves the necessary separation from his first love ob-

ject—Mother—by identifying with Father. But a girl faces the paradoxical task of detaching herself from her mother while continuing to identify with her to some degree. This ambiguous process of disentanglement is the more arduous if the mother is a high priestess of the very rite that every teen-ager wants to master above all others: seduction.

In the years before I left home for college, I passed canapés in my mother and stepfather's living room to fashion arbiters like Christian Dior, Adrian of Hollywood, Coco Chanel, and Irving Penn; to assorted sex symbols and media celebrities like Marlene Dietrich, Claudette Colbert, Janet Gaynor, Salvador Dali, and Ray Bolger; to a variety of world-class fashion plates like Babe Paley, Gloria Guinness, and Patricia Lopez-Wilshaw; and to the assembled membership of *Vogue's* glamorous editorial staff. Black-clad Mother whipped through her blazingly white-furnished rooms, bully-

ing her crowd with imperious decrees: "Dostoyevski ees terrible writer, nothing but journalist" or "Take off British dress, it look like tablecloth." Not many professional women had children in those days, and as I grew older Mother increasingly wished to show me off. Just before the guests arrived, she would peruse every inch of me—"Your face is too wide for straight hair"—and then propel me into the living room with a small shove in the small of my back, commanding, "*Charme.*"

Well into my twenties, I whirled through contradictory cycles—periods of servile obedience to my parents' swank monde, followed by periods of rebellion against it. During my last years at Spence, I spent my weekends looking for contraptions—chest-flattening bras, foot-shrinking shoes—that would purge me of those bodily details my mother so emphatically criticized. I followed numerous diets that might help me to resemble the meticulously starved models who flocked to her



parties. (One called for three days of buttermilk and soda water, another for three days of stewed prunes and tea.) I suppose I was both emulating the standards of style for which Mother was a conduit and fashioning my body to be as different as possible from her voluptuous one. What tormented misunderstandings occur between mothers and daughters! Compared with Tatiana and her ravishing women friends, I felt dreadfully plain, but her growing affection for me signalled that I was becoming more and more "presentable," as she put it, and also turning into what *she* would like to have been—a school-smart, tomboy-skinny "intellectual."

So I was a divided soul: while continuing to smile graciously and pass canapés to Elsa Maxwell and Pierre Balmain, I was carving out an imaginary future for myself that would be radically unlike my parents' lives. I, Francine Ludmilla Pauline Anne-Marie du Plessix, wanted to marry someone who would liberate me from all this shit. I dreamed of settling down with a scholarly, somewhat mystical gentleman farmer who wrote poetry or novels on the side. I yearned for a Tudor-parsonage-like home, with dark-wood panelling, ottomans tufted in deep burgundy, and a cozy kitchen where I would put up blackberry jam while listening to my husband talk about St. Paul's view of

the Resurrection and the eschatology of the Church Fathers.

But first I had to go to school. I spent two years at Bryn Mawr College and two at Barnard, flirting with a variety of careers as different from my parents' as possible. I began as a medievalist, dallied with physics and premed, and ended up majoring in philosophy and religion. I went to night classes at the Art Students League with the notion of becoming a painter, and later I came close to entering Union Theological Seminary. After my junior year, I spent a summer session at Black Mountain College, a community whose zeitgeist—rebellion against every form of established order—thrust my anti-parental cycle into high gear. I smoked an early-vintage pot (this was 1951), sat entranced through John Cage's Zen-anarchist events, played strip poker with Robert Rauschenberg, and particularly appalled my mother by wearing a leather motorcycle jacket and chopping my hair short and jagged. ("She has *shaved* herself!" Mother cried, and our friend Leo Lerman moaned, "You look like Port Authority Terminal.") The summer after graduation, I lived in New Orleans, where I drank bourbon with jazz clarinetists and played poker with a Communist cell. (The experience was salubrious: the members' humorlessness quickly inoculated me against the C.P.) I

returned to New York and worked for two years as a reporter on the overnight shift at the United Press, writing "World in Brief"s on murders, earthquakes, corn futures, and the latest developments in the Joseph McCarthy hearings. I was the only woman on the graveyard shift, and I relished the Martinis consumed with my male colleagues at 8 A.M. in Third Avenue bars, going home to a basement room whose address, in the West Village, so appalled my mother that she never deigned to visit it.

DURING the feminine, unquestioning Eisenhower fifties, Tatiana's career flourished as it never had before. Her hats were so popular that in 1955 Saks decided she should produce a ready-to-wear line alongside her custom designs, and sent her on the road to promote her creations in the Midwest. "Tatiana—so much the vogue!" a Saks ad in the *Times* announced. "Charming for Easter but prophetic for summer . . . the Deep-Mushroom, shadowy sheer or all-velvet." In the meantime, I, at the age of twenty-three, had moved to Paris, and was emulating the life *she* had led at twenty-three. I got a job with *Elle* and sat in the showrooms of Chanel, Patou, Givenchy, Dior, taking notes on the tweeds and tulles paraded at collection time. Down to a near-anorexic hundred and ten pounds, I pinned

dresses on models and wrote fashion captions that said, "Balenciaga's newest chemise surprise! False double hem, single-breasted buttoning down the side." Just as my mother had done in the thirties, I scrambled to get invited to the Baroness So-and-So's dinners, and borrowed dresses from couture houses to attend them.

My correspondence with my parents reflected my fear that their success and their bonds with important friends far superseded their need for me. "*Maman adorée*," one letter from the spring of 1955 reads. "I am crazed, crazed with joy at the prospect of accompanying you to Rome this summer. . . . I beg you not to change your mind. I'm not so much thrilled by the prospect of Rome as by the notion that it will be the only way we can be *quietly* together. You are as you always have been the crux of my existence." And then there were missives in which I stated my solidarity in practicing *their* trade—one



"Yes, you may go to the bathroom."

for which I felt increasingly unfit. "Monday the major hustling begins," I wrote. "Three major collections a day to cover and then sittings late into the night. I'm in the photo studio where I'm going to live through the rest of the week, preparing the color pages, which are made before the collections begin in an atmosphere of atomic secrecy, a messenger just arrived from Dior in an armored truck, pistols in each hand, with the suit we're using on the cover."

My frequently caustic descriptions of Paris high society seemed to impress Mother. Her crippled hand had always served as an excuse for not writing more than a few phrases, usually at the end of my stepfather's missives. But in the fall of 1955 I received a typed three-page letter in which she hinted that I might be "a writer": "Your long letter on . . . the Île Saint-Louis is, quite simply, a chef d'œuvre of contemporary prose. And you're totally mistaken if you think that it was too long, for I had Alex read it to me three evenings in a row."

But nothing delighted Mother more than the man I was going out with in my last year in Paris: an alcoholic prince. No A-plus college exams or creative-writing awards won at Barnard evoked such a surge of maternal approval as I received during my affair with that particular cad. And what was I doing with that ridiculous prince, with my borrowed finery and my mannequin's body and a fashion career that sent me into deep depressions? I was running as fast as I could toward my mother's approval and love; I was shouting, "I'm just like you now! Please pay attention! Pay attention at last!"

And then one morning in the middle of that race I woke up delirious, with a temperature of 105° and internal hemorrhages. I had an extreme case of mononucleosis. Doctors prescribed total rest for two months and partial rest for at least a year. I returned to the United States in the fall of 1956 to pursue my convalescence, and, as I stood on the boat deck waving to my parents, who were waiting on land below, I wore a Chanel suit of pink-and-gray tweed they had given me as a present for my twenty-sixth birthday. The first and last item of haute couture I



"Steve and I live together, but we're getting indicted separately."

would ever own, it marked the end of my life in fashion. A few weeks later, it was in this particular costume that I met my future husband, the reclusive, contemplative painter Cleve Gray, and soon I began to live that quiet country life in the snug, dark house I had dreamed of as a teen-ager. Here's a sign of my unmodish attitude toward clothes, and of my sentimental concern for any present my parents ever gave me: I so lovingly maintained the jacket of that Chanel suit that, in the fall of 1994, I wore it to the christening of my first grandchild.

WHAT was remarkable was the degree to which my mother seemed to approve of my marriage and my new life. My husband, who revered her, immediately became "world's best son-in-law." It helped that he spoke fluent French and was a Princeton graduate, the acme of my mother's simplistic hierarchy of American values. We had two sons, born sixteen months apart, and, as meticulously as I had crafted a quiet country life, radically different from Tatiana's, I attempted to give my children all that I had not received from her in my youth: I

drove daily car pools, ate dinner with them six days a week, gave them their first skiing and tennis lessons, tried to offer them constant companionship. My relations with Tatiana reached an unprecedented level of serenity in those years, maybe because I was continuing to fulfill a secret wish of the most loving mothers—the desire that their daughters not repeat their mistakes.

Tatiana was in the deepest sense a family person, with a Confucian devotion to most of her blood kin, and she adored her grandchildren. An abiding memory: Mother rushing up the stairs upon coming home from Saks when I brought my first baby to her New York house, shouting, "*Il est là! Il est là!*" and sweeping the six-week-old into her arms, repeatedly cooing, "*Joli garçon! Joli garçon!*" She grew to be hilariously competitive about my children, and they worshipped her. At the age of three, my older son announced, "I'm going to marry Grandma when I grow up." How she delighted in that: "He wants to marry *me*, not his mother."

Still, our friendship was not without its difficulties. Unable to master more than a few paragraphs in English, Tatiana

could never read or discuss my writing, except what was translated into French; she grew proud of me solely on the basis of reports that I was achieving "a reputation." Moreover, I had to keep my frontiers guarded. My husband and I visited my parents almost weekly at their house on East Seventieth Street, staying in my childhood room. But if Mother had had her way we would have been constantly under her thumb, attending the same parties she and Alex attended, joining them in their summer sites—Saint-Tropez, Ischia, the Lido. I politely said no to most of her offers and demands. No, we cannot come to the April-in-Paris ball next month; no, *Maman chérie*, don't make a copy of your Dior suit for me, it is simply too formal for my kind of life. "Why do you always say no to your mother?" asked my husband (whose life would have been far easier if he had said no early on to his own invasive mother). Within two years, he understood enough to cease asking the question. And, over time, Mother came to realize that my happiness had depended on my ability to carve out a realm of my own. So we visited across our borders, both of us still somewhat on guard, yet able to discuss the children's education, whatever books we'd both read in French, and the illness and death of old friends.

It is ironic that my career took off the very year Mother's declined. In the spring of 1965, just as I was placing my first pieces with *The New Yorker*, Saks's management decided that the hat department was losing too much money. And, with no great ceremony, Tatiana was fired by her friend Adam Gimbel. Owing to the waning interest in custom-design fashions, Sophie, who, miraculously, remained Mother's close friend, was to shut down the Salon Moderne altogether four years later, in 1969.

What I find most curious about Tatiana's twenty-three-year tenure at Saks is that she never dared ask for a raise. This timidity was part of her Old World culture, her grande-dame quality: for her, talk of money was taboo. The timidity also had to do with her self-demeaning modesty. However well she sold, Mother never thought she was selling *enough*. ("I'm not *worth* more than they're giving me," she told my stepfather whenever he urged her to ask Adam Gimbel for a raise.) And so the fabulous Tatiana of

Saks ended her career receiving virtually the same salary she had been offered two decades earlier as a refugee—a little more than eleven thousand dollars a year. Nor did she receive a pension. "She's a countess," Gimbel told my stepfather when he got up his courage to raise the issue. "And everyone knows you're well off now."

The demise of Tatiana's calling in the early and mid-nineteen-sixties had deep roots in the culture at large: by the late nineteen-sixties, the only people showing enthusiasm for headgear were members of the counterculture, and they wore symbolic hats—coonskin caps, Che Guevara berets, gypsy scarves, Native American headbands—to express their sympathy with oppressed political and racial minorities, with all that was tribal, ethnic, primitive. Tatiana's aesthetic had been one of quietly elitist moderation, of seductive yet tamed femininity. And nothing could have been more abhorrent to her than the forthright, egalitarian sensuality that accompanied the end of the hat and was reflected in the fashion magazines that had been her bibles since her youth—Helmut Newton's lascivious Valkyries, Deborah Turbeville's shots of seemingly masturbating girls. A few years before her death, Tatiana shyly brought out an album of her press clips and photographs to look at with me—flattering, Horst-like shots of daintily groomed Jean Patchett modelling Tatiana's exquisite boaters, bretons, toques. "Don't women still want *becoming* fashions?" she asked me wistfully.

Mother was only fifty-nine when she was fired, and was still filled with volcanic energy. If I had my life to live over again, I would see to it that I visited with her more often in those first years of her retirement, and praised the valor of her career—to make her know that her sometimes intractable daughter was also her most loyal admirer. I would have tried to be a pure *friend* of Tatiana, to cultivate a comradeship uncluttered by the debris of mother-daughter relations. What a gigantic appetite and gift for friendship she had! Her ardent attachments extended far beyond the "useful" women of New York. They included dozens of friends from the nineteen-thirties, and a number of charity cases—down-and-out Russians, meek little ladies from the Midwest—whom she fed and sheltered because they had been put in her care, sometimes decades earlier, by an acquaintance.

But I was at home in Connecticut,

raising my children, writing about and working for political causes. In the late nineteen-sixties, my involvement in the antiwar movement created new sources of tension between Tatiana and me. Like most Russian émigrés, she was militantly opposed to any détente with the Communist world. During Connecticut weekends, she would watch me while I was designing Eugene McCarthy posters or making phone calls about some forthcoming peace rally. A lifelong teetotaler, she had begun to drink in her retirement, and she would growl at me over her glass of Bordeaux, "You sell out to Hanoi? You play into hands of Vietcong?"

Can we ever invent an ideal parent? Returning from an antiwar demonstration in Washington with the photographer Richard Avedon, I mused, "What would I have been like if I'd had a mother who could *understand* me . . . like Hannah Arendt, say?" Avedon replied, "You'd have become a fashion model."

In her new idleness, Mother read more than ever—an average of four or five books a week in French or Russian. She went to Kenneth's every few days to have her hair dressed. She now played canasta every afternoon. She received and counselled former clients, who continued to pour out their hearts to her. She became a cultural icon to the many Russian artists and poets who were beginning to arrive in the United States: Voznesensky, Yevtushenko, Brodsky, Baryshnikov, and Rostropovich all flocked to admire Mayakovsky's muse, to hear her recitations of Russian verse. Yet Mother soon lost the marvellous dynamism that had characterized her when she was Tatiana of Saks. In photographs taken of her after 1965 her formerly searing gaze is replaced by a haunted, sorrowful stare, as if she were looking back at a lost treasure, a lost purpose—her work.

Her physical decline began in 1976. She had a mild heart attack, and then, in 1981, she endured a five-and-a-half-hour gallbladder operation, which kept her in the hospital for nearly two months. She became addicted to powerful painkillers and was never able to shake them off. She stayed in bed much of the day, and received only a few of her very oldest friends for tea. She still played canasta once or twice a week, but friends reported that she was too muddled to think her way through a game, and in order to keep her

spirits up they purposefully lost several games a month to her. (How Mother could fake! She pretended to me that she *always* won.) In 1985, she fell and broke her hip, and she stopped going out altogether. She became a near-invalid, her life valiantly prolonged by my stepfather's attention, and by the care of the remarkable nurse-companion of her last ten years, Melinda Pachengo.

Mother and I began a curious new sar-torial relationship: whenever I visited New York to spend an evening with friends, I dressed for dinner and then went to her room to say good night. "*Montre-toi!*" she would command, scrutinizing me through her bifocals and offering some comment like "Can't you put some curl in your hair?" or "What would we do without *shawls*?" I chafed under her gaze, but what else did I have to offer her? I was now her surrogate fashion plate—the only body, the only style she had left to exhibit.

Toward the end, Mother regressed into a deep, exclusive Russianness. She wanted to see only Russian friends, watch only Russian films, taste only Russian food. In the span of two years, my stepfather hired thirty-two different chefs in the hope that one of them might reawaken her waning appetite, but to no avail. Three days before her death, in the spring of 1991, I came to see her. She had been in bed for months and in the hospital for many weeks. She weighed ninety-eight pounds. She was lying on her bed in a white bathrobe and had a book in her hand, which I knew she was only pretending to read, for she did not even have her glasses on. She showed no emotion and no sadness—just an immense lassitude. I sat down on her bed and talked to her quietly, mostly about the children, telling her not to speak, for she had barely

any voice left. Her eyelids were fluttering, and I kissed her good night. "Wait," she said weakly. "Pass me my glasses. I want to see you." I obeyed. She motioned for me to rise, and gave me one very long, exhaustive stare. I was wearing a black silk pants suit that she had given me some years before, after she stopped going out. The closest thing to a smile that she could still summon crossed her face, and she managed to whisper, "*Très joli. Tu dois toujours porter des pantalons.*"



The author with her mother in 1946. Tatiana was "a high priestess of the very rite that every teen-ager wants to master above all others: seduction."

SHE is buried a mile from my house, in our family plot in the Warren, Connecticut, cemetery. I take flowers to her grave every few weeks when the weather is warm. She has returned to me in several dreams, but never more powerfully than in a dream I had recently, the night before the third anniversary of her death. It went this way:

I am living quietly in a simple country house with two women companions—kindly, neutral presences, both slightly older than I. Our house is on a hill overlooking a valley, within view of another hill of equal height. Suddenly, a message

arrives from Mother saying that she is living across the valley and wishes me to come immediately to live with her on "Atlanta," the hill opposite ours. (Clever subconscious! Change the "l" to an "i," and you get an anagram of Tatiana.) Mother's message annoys me. I send her back the message "I am very happy where I am, I do *not* wish to go live with you in Atlanta." Next, there arrives a wizened, graying man, a Father Time figure. No, I say again to Mother as Father Time

brings me another imperious message from her. No, I shall *not* join you on the other side. No, I shall stay where I am. You're telling me that *your* side of the valley is better—the *only* place to be, but I'm not going yet! Whereupon Mother appears at the house of my two women companions to join me on my own hill. She is the radical opposite of the mother I knew: a tiny, smiling old lady, wearing a timid black hat—a submissive little toque, the kind of hat Mother might have designed for a client who had a family funeral to attend. But Mother smiles merrily and waves and blows me kisses from across the room, and I blow kisses back, and there is a sense of serenity, of mutual approval, of understanding between

us more total than we ever shared in life.

Upon waking, I phoned a friend who is very keen on filial issues. "What does it mean?" I asked after telling her the dream. "It means you won," she answered. The answer was a trifle too Yankee, too competitive for me. "What does it *mean*?" I pestered my husband. "It means she loved you," he said.

That morning, as I brought Mother my flowers and tended her grave, I said, Thank you, *Maman chérie*, for the dream. Thank you for this wondrous life, which I've crafted in opposition to you, and in the spirit of your grace. ♦

DEPT. OF DISPUTATION

McNAMARA'S PEACE

*What happens when an apolitical man becomes a decision-maker in a political vortex like the Vietnam War?
The question is at the heart of the controversy over Robert McNamara's memoir.*

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

BY 1967, when tens of thousands of young protesters were marching on the Pentagon against the Vietnam War and General William C. Westmoreland was demanding the deployment of another two hundred thousand men, Lyndon Johnson believed that Robert McNamara, his Secretary of Defense, was going mad. "That man could have a mental breakdown," the President confided to an aide. "I'm afraid we could even have another Forrestal on our hands." The reference was to James Forrestal, Harry Truman's former Secretary of Defense, who became so overwrought, early in the Cold War, that he entered the Bethesda Naval Medical Center for treatment and there threw himself out a window to his death. Johnson's diagnosis of incipient suicidal psychosis in the man who had once proudly proclaimed, "I must say I don't object to its being called McNamara's War," was drawn from his reading of the Defense Secretary's anguish over the futility of the war and his attempt to get the President to enter into negotiations. Later, after his Presidency, Johnson, in one of his Lear-like soliloquies to his biographer Doris Kearns, ascribed McNamara's ungluing and betrayal to the pressure of his own nemesis, Robert F. Kennedy. "The Kennedys began pushing him harder and harder," Johnson explained. "Every day Bobby would call up McNamara, telling how the war was terrible and immoral and that he had to leave. Two months before he left he felt he was a murderer and didn't know how to extricate himself. . . . I was afraid he might have a nervous breakdown."

Twenty-seven years after his departure from the Pentagon, in 1968—Johnson nominated him to be president of the World Bank—Robert McNamara has finally taken Robert Kennedy's

advice: he has made a public statement on the war. If he expected that with the publication of his memoir, "In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam," he would stimulate calm discussion of the nature of policymaking—something like a leisurely afternoon seminar at the Council on Foreign Relations—he has been disappointed.

All sides accuse him of betrayal, differing only on when the deed was done. To the antiwar left, the perfidy was in the past: McNamara knew the war was wrong in 1967 but didn't say so when it would have counted. To the revanchist right, it is in the present: he has blown the whistle on their cherished doctrine that the war was winnable if only the civilians had been steadfast. To some veterans, it's in both past and present: then he sent their comrades to die; now he tells them their sacrifice was for naught.

McNamara's public emergence has turned into days of rage. The *Times* began the month-long festival on April 12th with a lead editorial, "Mr. McNamara's War," in which his name was inscribed among eternal villains, his effort at confession worthy only of shunning. "Mr. McNamara must not escape the lasting moral condemnation of his countrymen," the *Times* wrote. He was blamed for every death in the war: "Three million Vietnamese died. Fifty-eight thousand Americans got to come home in body bags. Mr. McNamara, while tormented by his role in the war, got a sinecure at the World Bank and summers at the Vineyard."

Max Frankel, a media columnist for the *Times* and the paper's former executive editor, whose style is typically grave and respectful, the tone that he applied to his diplomatic coverage of Henry Kissinger, weighed in with scorn and derision on the front page of the *Book Review*: "In his 79th year, Robert S.

McNamara at long last offers the public a glimpse of his aching conscience."

That same Sunday, April 16th, David Halberstam, author of "The Best and the Brightest," an account of the New Frontiersmen and Vietnam, published a lengthy, excoriating review in the Los Angeles *Times*. Halberstam described McNamara as "a man so contorted and so deep in his own unique self-delusion and self-division that he still doesn't know who he is and what he did at that time." His review apparently lacked the space for Halberstam to note that he is a minor character in McNamara's memoir. In the early nineteen-sixties, he was a New York *Times* correspondent in Vietnam, and McNamara remarks that he was critical of any softening of the war effort, quoting him for nearly a full page. "To be fair to Halberstam, the hawkish views he was expressing reflected the opinion of the majority of journalists at the time," he writes. Only gradually did Halberstam turn against the war—about the same time that McNamara did on the inside.

The battle was soon joined by William Styron and William Manchester, who published a joint letter to the *Times* on April 26th, defending McNamara in his writing of his book. "No mea culpa deserves such contempt. It is true that his comes late—very late—but it should be saluted, not scorned. . . . America can never be damaged by an act of contrition."

McNamara has defended himself from charges of betrayal by his claim to be a loyalist. If he spoke out, he would then have been the true betrayer of his oath. This, of course, is a curious, crabbed view of citizenship, an idea of himself as a member of a clerisy. But, obviously, McNamara also feels an obligation to history, be-

ginning with his commissioning of the Pentagon Papers and now ending with the publication of his memoir. It is valuable not only for what he says but also for what he doesn't realize he's disclosing.

MCNAMARA'S tortured history serves as a reminder of his limitations, with which we have been long familiar. He is not a literary stylist. He is not able to convey more than the briefest suggestion of his personal reactions to his experiences, yet these minimalist accounts may be the full rendering, entirely accurate in their inadequate way. At one point, for example, he recalls Jacqueline Kennedy, in 1966, pounding her fists on his chest and demanding that he "do something to stop the slaughter." McNamara writes, "I was so overwhelmed by her feelings that I still remember every detail of the incident." One of the details is that he was "overwhelmed," but the reader gets no more than that unpacked word. Now the steel-trap bureaucrat appears before us weeping himself.

"To this day, I see quantification as a language to add precision to reasoning about the world," he writes. In February of 1946, McNamara, just mustered out of the Army, where he had been a statistical-control expert, went to work for the Ford Motor Company as part of a small group of young former officers who were known as the Whiz Kids—the original incarnation of "the best and the brightest." This band of brothers offered a parable of success in the postwar era. The tensions of the Depression years

were no longer to be resolved by class conflict. In the postwar prosperity, the university-trained manager, not the robber baron, presided. He ruled not by primitive force but by neutral problem solving. McNamara was the greatest of these hero technocrats, the most successful, the first president of Ford not to bear the Ford name. McNamara had a deep faith in "the processes of objective analysis." He believed that experts at-

greatest mystique, being regarded universally with deference and awe. He was the new man. He had subdued the world of the modern corporation, and he would now conquer government. A story that assumed the status of legend at the time had it that when his aides arrived at the Pentagon for the day's work they felt his car hood to see if it was warm, and it was usually cold: they were late; it was Sunday morning. Sleep was another factor to be subdued.

The end of ideology became a credo of the Kennedy Administration. "The fact is that most of the problems, or at least many of them, that we now face are technical problems, are administrative problems," President Kennedy said in 1962. "They are very sophisticated judgments which do not lend themselves to the great sort of 'passionate movements' which have stirred this country so often in the past." McNamara, above all, with his ring of command, personified the managerial vision.

YET the end-of-ideologists of the Kennedy Administration were in fact ideological crusaders. They had gleaned what they considered an irrefutable lesson from the Truman



Analysts assign competing motives to McNamara's mea culpa: hypocrisy, remorse, a sense of historical duty. But he still seems baffled by the emotions he has stirred.

tained their Olympian position because of their accumulation of facts. "I have always believed that the more important the issue, the fewer people should be involved in the decision," he said. McNamara's very manner—his brisk confidence and his lack of expressive emotion—seemed proof of his mastery. Of all the figures that John F. Kennedy chose for his Cabinet, McNamara was the most original and the one with the

Administration, which had been mercilessly Red-baited. Instead of being Democrats on the defensive, accused of losing ground to the Communists, they surrounded themselves with Special Forces and went on the offensive. This derangement of strategy occurred before Kennedy became President, and it was ratified in his stirring Inaugural Address, in which he pledged to "pay any price, bear any

burden." McNamara writes that the Administration's essential strategy was adduced from George F. Kennan's idea of containment, the fundament of American Cold War policy. "I saw Communism as monolithic," McNamara writes. But Kennan, the chief of policy planning in Truman's State Department, did not embrace that view. On the contrary, he saw the Soviet Union as holding the seeds of its own destruction, and containment in Europe as the way to allow that internal process to evolve.

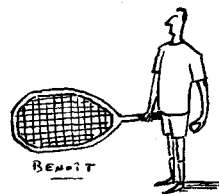
McNamara, like most of his fellow-officers during the war, was in the grip of a myth—that the Third World War could be fended off by applying the lessons of the Second, the main lesson being to avoid appeasement of potential aggressors. These lessons were boiled down to the indiscriminate concept of universal containment, and that concept seemed to have been proved by the Korean War.

Within the councils of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, only Under-Secretary of State George Ball consistently opposed engagement in the Vietnam War. "George was an Atlanticist who firmly believed in the primacy of America's relations with Europe," McNamara writes. "Because he was recognized as having a strong European bias, Dean [Rusk], Mac [McGeorge Bundy], and I treated his views about Vietnam guardedly." But precisely because he was an Atlanticist Ball got it right. The Cold War was about the postwar division of Europe, particularly as it cut through Germany. In terms of ending the Cold War, the most important event during the Kennedy Administration was the Berlin crisis, in 1961. The United States had only to stand fast. The dynamic that led to the building of the Wall led, in time, to its demolition. And then the entire edifice of Communism crumbled. In retrospect, the Vietnam War was utterly irrelevant to the outcome of the Cold War. It had nothing to do with the collapse of the Soviet Union, which occurred much as Kennan had foreseen it. The war was a basic confusion of tactics with strategy. If there had been any strategy, the United States ought to have built up Vietnam to play as a counter to its historic adversary, China, just as recognition of China played a part in containing the Soviet Union.

With the Cold War over, Vietnam's relative insignificance has been plainly and painfully exposed. The only consequences of the Vietnam War for the United States were political and economic—all of them disastrous. They flowed in great part from the pressures of the right, which forced a one-dimensional view of the "monolithic" Soviet-Chinese axis, in which Vietnam was only a hanger-on.

Vietnam, however, never fit the model for a crusade. As early as November 15, 1961, in a National Security Council meeting, Kennedy was raising qualms about military commitments to South Vietnam. According to McNamara, the President felt that the situation was "ambiguous," unlike that of Korea, and said that a strong case could be made against intervention. Nobody took him up on it.

Still, McNamara's disillusionment with the leadership of South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem grew rapidly. "I did not understand him," he writes. McNamara recognized the dilemma that South Vietnam posed: the country ultimately had to defend itself, but its inherent instability prevented it from achieving its goal. He reveals that all the major policymakers were dissatisfied with "the information we received from Vietnam." They were at a dead end, and



they knew it. In early November of 1963, Diem was assassinated, in a coup that the United States had encouraged. "We faced an utter political vacuum in South Vietnam and had no basis for proceeding on any course compatible with U.S. objectives," McNamara writes. Within three weeks, Kennedy, too, was assassinated. These two murders changed the landscape but not the policy.

At President Johnson's behest, McNamara travelled to Vietnam in December of 1963. He discovered that there was no political leadership and that resources were being wasted. "Basic questions went unexamined," he writes. Nor did he examine them himself. Kennedy's death allowed McNamara to project his magnetic confidence and brilliance toward the new President. "Goddammit, Bob, that's what's wrong with you—you aren't a politician," Johnson told McNamara at one point.

McNamara was the genius technocrat; Johnson was the master politician. And Johnson had political models in mind that he wished to avoid: Franklin D. Roosevelt's fall from grace after his failed effort to pack the Supreme Court, and Harry Truman's similar fall during the Korean War (the war that Kennedy had said was unlike Vietnam). So Johnson prepared a resolution asking Congress to approve increased United States military involvement; it awaited only a precipitating incident, which soon came—in August of 1964, in the Tonkin Gulf. Johnson believed he was covering bets that Roosevelt and Truman had not covered. Johnson was intimately familiar with every aspect of American politics. But Vietnamese politics was, to him, sheer arcana. The President deferred to the weight of expert opinion, such as McNamara's. "Win the war!" L.B.J. exhorted him.

Even before the major escalation, the war was being fought for abstractions. By 1964, McNamara writes, the C.I.A.'s Board of National Estimates was making arguments for pursuing the war in terms of "prestige" and "credibility." Fearmongering about China and the fall of the Third World to Communism was laced into the mixture. This analysis confirmed "that the West's containment policy lay at serious risk in Vietnam," McNamara writes about what he now considers an illusion. On these premises were constructed the numbers, the gaming theories, the spreadsheets of body counts. American strategy was now driven by image, and the image inevitably had to turn on itself; with image as the goal, time became the enemy.

According to McNamara, a "desperate energy" surrounded each neurotically repeated escalation to fill each recurring vacuum in Vietnam. Yet McNamara does not truly explain why, after finding no answers, he argued for large-scale escalations. The expert's expert was unthinking. He was part of the vacuum.

The most crucial decision to escalate was taken by Johnson in late July of 1965. Missing from McNamara's account is the meeting at Camp David on July 25th, where Clark Clifford argued the case courtroom style directly against McNamara as Johnson listened. The story forms a hinge in Clifford's memoir, "Counsel to the Presi-

CESAREAN

The surgeon with his unapologetic
blade parted darkness, revealing
day. Then from her large clay
he drew toward his masked
face my small clay. The clatter,
the white light, the vast freedom
were terrible. Outside in, oh, inside
out, and why did everybody shout?

—JANE KENYON

dent.” (His account is verified by detailed notes in the L.B.J. Library.) In this meeting, Clifford, who had been a senior Truman aide and an adviser to Kennedy, used George Ball’s memorandums in pleading that the war could not be won. He painted a picture that was unimaginable to those in the room: “Five years, fifty thousand men killed, hundreds of billions of dollars—it is just not for us. . . . I can’t see anything but catastrophe for my country.” When he finished, McNamara reiterated his call for more troops, and Johnson had already decided in favor of McNamara’s position.

McNamara was tethered to that position, and he spent years trying to escape from it. By the spring of 1966, he began to argue for negotiations—gradually and then vehemently—just as he had for escalation. Johnson genuinely thought he was losing his mind. McNamara heard stories of the President’s comparing him to Forrestal. “I was not getting answers to my questions; and I was tense as hell,” he writes. “The fact is I had come to the conclusion, and had told him point-blank, that we could not achieve our objective in Vietnam through any reasonable military means, and we therefore should seek a lesser political objective through negotiations.”

In early 1968, Johnson replaced McNamara, who had become a dove, with Clark Clifford, who had become a hawk during the escalations that had disillusioned McNamara. But after conducting an internal review of policy Clifford essentially adopted the program that McNamara had prepared and Johnson had refused to put into effect. Clifford, unlike McNamara, was no mere technocrat; he was a political

player of the highest order, and he was not seeking the heavenly white light of neutrality. His intention was to save the Democratic Party, and he very nearly did so, by setting in motion the circumstances that forced Johnson to announce that he would not run for reelection, encouraging Robert F. Kennedy’s candidacy, and pushing the vacillating Hubert Humphrey to break with Johnson on the war. What might have happened if Bobby Kennedy had not been assassinated remains another great unknowable. It is likely that he would have been nominated (with the support of that secret but fervent dove Mayor Richard J. Daley, of Chicago) and entirely possible that he would have beaten Nixon, just as his brother had. As it was, Humphrey came within a whisker.

Could a public dissent by McNamara have made a difference in ending the war? His views were an open secret in Washington. At dinner parties while he was still the Pentagon chief, he delivered this toast: “Bless the doves—we need more of them.” McNamara drew closer to Bobby, conferring often with him on Vietnam as Bobby became more outspoken. After assuming the presidency of the World Bank, McNamara made a television commercial for Bobby’s Presidential campaign—an incident he neglects to mention in his book. The *Times*—interestingly, in light of its response to “In Retrospect”—thundered editorially that he had “displayed poor judgment and poorer taste,” and that his act “shakes, if it does not destroy, confidence in his sense of the political proprieties.” But after Richard Nixon won the election McNamara did not openly attack Nixon’s continuation of a

policy that he had hinted strongly in his campaign he would abandon. Many of the others who had made American policy, including Averell Harriman and Clark Clifford, had already voiced their objections to the war, to no effect, though their collective authority was surely as great as McNamara’s. It is difficult to imagine that a McNamara statement would have caused Nixon to change course or would have altered his forty-nine-state reelection victory. Ultimately, it was Nixon’s response to one of McNamara’s legacies, the Pentagon Papers—the internal study of the war he commissioned after becoming the target of an antiwar protest at Harvard—that catalyzed the events leading to Watergate.

THE attacks on McNamara for his book are part of the demonization of the nineteen-sixties, not its antidote. McNamara and the antiwar protesters are now of a piece, and not only because they were bound by conflict and McNamara now says he saw the war as a mistake. It is also because they shared a confidence in the ability of the country collectively to solve its problems. What the protesters were protesting was the perversion of that spirit—a course pursued relentlessly in Vietnam by its avatars.

If McNamara was captive to a myth and a mind-set, Henry Kissinger—who entered the play as a duplicitous double agent in the 1968 campaign, undermining the Paris peace talks by leaking to the Nixon campaign the negotiations to which he was privy—was free of such encumbrances. McNamara lacked the terrible example of himself; Kissinger stepped onto the stage after the war’s premises were discredited. To sustain and expand the war, Kissinger erected a tower of abstractions drawn from nuclear theology to rationalize his role as the shuttle Realpolitiker—Bismarck in a jet. McNamara, in a chart toward the end of his book, presents the body counts. By July of 1965, when the decision for vast escalation was made, but when President Kennedy might well have wound up the American involvement, the number of Americans killed in action was 509. By December of 1967, when the Johnson escalations were coming to an end, the number was 15,979. By January of 1973, after

Kissinger, on the eve of the 1972 election, proclaimed that "peace is at hand," the number was 58,191. The number of Vietnamese and Cambodians killed after McNamara left office runs into untold millions.

What if? In his discussion of what that consummate politician John Kennedy would have done about Vietnam, McNamara overlooks the political factor. He argues that it was "highly probable" that Kennedy was moving toward a reassessment of the policy and would have withdrawn the American advisers. The preponderance of Kennedy's comments, McNamara notes, stressed that the Vietnamese had to defend themselves. He suggests that Kennedy would have been willing to pay the price for withdrawal, even if it meant losing all Southeast Asia to Communism. McNamara does not think to mention the election of 1964 as a consideration. Though Kennedy's instinctive caution made him hesitate about deepening the commitment in Vietnam, he could not have moved until after his victory. Would he have been willing to risk the accusation from the right that he had "lost" Vietnam, or, in a search for new tactics, would he have listened to those who wanted to stay the course? Kennedy might have stayed in Vietnam for political reasons, and if he had chosen to withdraw it would also have been for political reasons. It was politics that drove the war, and it was politics that eventually ended it. This McNamara has never understood.

The utopian idea that held McNamara tightly in its grip—that the rational can purge government of politics—still enchants. Countless futurists preach that if we only adjust our society in line with electronics we will get the right answers: we will produce a greater democracy, a new stage of civilization, a reaffirmation of community. The new model is cybernetic and postindustrial rather than managerial and industrial, but the human—the irrational, the passionate, the unpredictable—remains unaccounted for. As every programmer knows: Garbage in, garbage out. Ostensibly, McNamara's book is about Vietnam. He is unaware that, by indirection, "In Retrospect" is a cautionary tale about the hero technocrat whose smug apolitical impulse helped create a political whirlwind. ♦

POSTSCRIPT

GINGER ROGERS

BY ARLENE CROCE

SHE stands at the top of the stairs, backlit by the starry heavens. She turns, and the crisscrossed sparkling straps on the back of her white gown are like the iridescence of the dew that falls from those heavens. She descends the stairs. Her walk, her back, the whiteness and the dewiness are perfect. And she hasn't begun to dance.

This is Ginger at her most goddessy, in the "Never Gonna Dance" sequence in "Swing Time," one of the icons of the platinum thirties. But it's not the real, the only Ginger. In that same film, she is annoyed by Astaire on the dance floor. Suppressing her anger, she smiles through clenched teeth. She isn't going to take his guff, but she isn't about to lose her temper, either. Manners matter to her. When you don't have money—and in the Depression nobody had any—manners, morals, ethics are coin of the realm. In her continually wounded sense of self-worth and her spirited defense of it lies the drama of Ginger Rogers. It transcends self-interest; it is in essence idealistic, an insistence on the dignity of the individual, the responsibility of the citizen, the honor of the woman she knows herself to be when she's at the top of the stairs.

Hollywood translated all this into the pride of the working girl, but Ginger rose above the simplification by never playing the same part twice in the same way. Penny Carrol, the dancing instructor in "Swing Time," and Polly Parrish, the department-store clerk in "Bachelor Mother," are not the same person. Where Penny is melancholy, the crushed idealist tempted by despair, Polly is bitterly knowledgeable. Terminally provoked by David Niven (male callousness was ever Ginger's *bête noire*), she dismisses him with a curt "Why don't you go. Now." But it's the flicker of the humorless smile on her lips as she says it that really cuts. She's ready to wipe him out of her life, as she has others.

Polly lives alone in a boarding house, and we never learn anything about her background. The typical Rogers heroine

of the thirties had no family, no home town, no life before the film begins. Rogers herself filled in what R.K.O.'s scriptwriters failed to provide. In "Stage Door," everybody has somebody—Lucille Ball has drunken relatives in Seattle; Katharine Hepburn has a rich father, whom we meet; the doomed Andrea Leeds has an unhappy love life lurking in her past; even Eve Arden has a cat. And Rogers has a boyfriend dimly glimpsed in one scene. But she doesn't use the boyfriend to build her character—half child, half cynic, hostile out of a sense of hopelessness. We feel that she's been through some terrible ordeal, is still going through it, but it has nothing to do with the boyfriend. Rogers was actually better inventing her characters' motives than relying on scriptwriters. By the time she plays the definitive working girl in "Kitty Foyle," the gritty realism has disappeared: Kitty is glamorized because by 1940 Rogers was a big star; and the script, adapted from a popular novel, gives her too many antecedents to distill into her characteristic motiveless motivation.

In the same way that Rogers invented motivation for her characters, she invented their wit. Timing alone makes her wisecracks funny; on the page, most of them are dead. Rogers could play women from nowhere because she lived so vividly on the screen—and I do mean the movie screen, the forty-foot-high wonder screen where every trace of emotion revealed itself and the least little flash of a dimple counted. Like Clara Bow, one of her idols, she has to be seen as she was meant to be seen; stills don't do it, nor, I'm afraid, do videocassettes.

Even though she was writ large (on, for example, the screen of the Radio City Music Hall, where she had more pictures play than any other actress), Rogers' subtlety caused her talent to be underrated. I think, too, that her many modes, which originally brought her stardom, eventually undid it. Because she was always experimenting—with hair styles, with wardrobes, with voices, with ranges of feeling—she could be

alienating, and since her castoff modes were always being picked up and aggrandized by other actresses she gradually phased herself out of the top rank. Even the songs she introduced did not belong to her. Of course, she had no voice (you *watched* Ginger Rogers sing), but the bittersweet temperament and the succinct colloquial speech that could well have inspired lyricists to write some of her best lines—"Ol' Man Sunshine, listen you, never tell me dreams come true" or "A fine romance, my friend, this is"—passed too easily into the national mood to remain the property of any one person.

Ginger Rogers was a star because she was unique and representative at the same time; she was complicatedly iconographic. Her very name tells us all we need to know. First of all, it's euphonious (those three soft "g"s), and then what the first name specifies—something delicious—the last name, a half rhyme, pluralizes. She was Everywoman and also an elusive, disturbingly singular person. Hollywood got one thing right: as if to dramatize her in both singular and plural terms, many of her R.K.O. films, and some later ones, too, open with a long shot of a crowded place—a typing pool, a movie theatre, a railroad station—and slowly close in, picking out the one in a million whom we've come to see.

It's entirely appropriate that someone so elemental yet incorporating so much should have been a wonderful partner—not only to Astaire but to all her co-stars. It's also appropriate that, alone of the generation of actresses who, in Pauline Kael's phrase, "made American women marvellous," Ginger Rogers inhabited two realms of fantasy. Besides the dream world of the movies, there was the dance. Here, too, she spread her example wide. You see it happening in old newsreels of the Rockettes. In the early thirties, they're all bent on being Ruby Keelers—nose-to-the-grindstone tappers. By the end of the decade, their center of gravity has lifted, their heads are high: they're Gingers. I loved the dancer, the poetic Ginger. But I loved the actress, too, and loved her best when her role let a touch of the poet show through. For me, she will always be what she was then—the fabulous Miss Average, imaginative, unsentimental, the dyed-in-the-wool product of an era and one of its immortal symbols. ♦

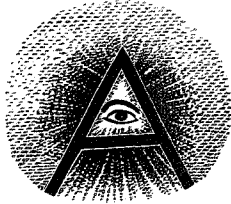
PAUL DAVIS



FICTION

NOT THIS

BY MATTHEW KLAM



Am I a good person or a bad person? I'm not a great person—I know that. I've been a certain way my whole life: Mr. Showcase, Mr. Jokey, Mr. Handshake. After a while, even I can't stand it. I look down on people. I've got a short fuse. I piss on my friends. I always thought the benefit of being this type of guy was that you forget the things you do to people, and you go on living in a happy pink bubble. You're not such a good person, but you're allowed to forget.

I had gone over to Kiffany's with the idea of persuading her. I took the gun. I have a confession to make: As a kid I was fascinated by Nazis. I hated them, like everybody else; I would think up tortures to pay them back—gouge out their eyes with a rusty fork, rip off their balls with pliers and shove them down their throats—but I also thought they were terrible and dangerous and, so, worth thinking about. I drew swastikas on my notebook. I ordered a catalogue of war paraphernalia from the back of a comic book, and in it were wool uniforms and spiked German helmets, Third Reich binoculars, leather holsters, and guns—cigarette lighters made to look like guns—and, after all these years, I still had the gun I got then. It was a lighter that looked like a .45, the American gun. It was fun to use. A big flame came out of the barrel. At my place, Kiffany lit her smokes with it seven times a night. It was big and heavy. It looked real.

I had on a T-shirt and gym shorts, the elastic waistband of the shorts bulging and stretched out. I had one hot, red ear from an hour on the phone with Kiffany, who lived two blocks away, more toward downtown New Haven, and I'm running over there in my flip-flops with this gun tucked into my shorts. Don't ask me to explain the state I had reached by the time I headed over there. Sometimes love is not what it's cracked up to be. I had this idea

of using the gun as a prop, actually to lighten the mood of our quarrel, like, "Why don't I just kill us both? Why don't you just shoot me, or I'll shoot you?"

An old guy in a station wagon had his turn signal on and was pulling toward me—I realized then that I was walking across his driveway—and I hurried up a little so he could turn. The gun fell down my shorts. It hit the ground and broke. They said it was identical to the real thing except for the lighter mechanism. Obviously not. The old man looked at it and looked at me. I grabbed the three biggest pieces and ran up to Kiffany's house and went in.

We started in on the same fight we'd been having on the phone. Kiffany said, Hold me; Kiffany said, Let me go. I let go of her, all right. I was frustrated, and we were both so tired of fighting—I let her go kind of through a doorway, like, Get away from me, so she could maybe go sit in the other room, where it was cooler. Except the door was closed—a swinging-type door with no knob. I forgot to look, and she found that out with her nose. Well, more her forehead. Afterward, we both cried and she put ice on it and I left and went home and she didn't press charges on me. That's when I knew it was time to take a break.

My brother called then. It had been a while. Dave's my older brother, and I could tell him my problems. He listened. Then he said he had a reason for calling. He had something to tell me—good news. I said I didn't think there was any good news left. He said, "Hey Vince, Denise is pregnant."

"Wow—shit," I said.

"What do you think?"

"That's great," I said.

"We're pretty happy," he said. I asked him how long before it would pop. He said seven months.

"You got enough money for it?"

"Yeah."

Dave had been really busy. Getting

married and a new house on the Jersey shore and a new job. We weren't as close as we had been. Everybody was so wrapped up with work that we hardly ever called each other. We waited too long and then had nothing to say.

I hadn't been to their house since Christmas, and that was the first time I'd seen it. Dave had met Denise two years earlier, taking golf lessons. Then, in the span of eight months, they got engaged, set a date, joined a church and a health club, got married, bought a house, and now she was pregnant. We hung up, and when I thought about that call I could picture Dave touching her belly.

They live near the water. Some things are automatically picture-perfect. It dawned on me that the weather down there is always good, and with Labor Day coming it might be a nice idea to visit them. "Uncle Vince"—it clanged like an old, familiar bell. I called him back. I reminded him of the troubles I'd been having with Kiffany, and said that since there was a holiday weekend, I was thinking of getting out of the city.

"You're saying you want to come down?"

"Maybe. I don't know—sure."

"Let me ask Denise," he said. "I'll call you back."

"Great," I said. "Fantastic."

"I'll call you back."

"Hey, how far are you guys from the water?" I couldn't quite remember.

"Not far," he said.

"Is there going to be a picnic or anything?"

"A picnic?"

"Like a Labor Day picnic."

"I don't know of any picnic."

"I'll bet there's something in your area—a street fair or a sack race. I haven't been to a picnic in ten years."

"Let me call you later."

It would be good to get away from this scene for a while. To be there at the start of their little family—my timing was perfect. Later, Dave called and said it was O.K. So I put some stuff

in the trunk Friday morning. After lunch I got out on the road and turned south.

KIFFANY was the last in a long line of failures. Looking back over the years, I could see a pattern. Pictures came into my head on the road to my brother's house. Old faces drifted across the road in front of me, things I had done. I looked for a good station on the radio. The drive was about four and a half hours long.

Kiffany was the best looking, the smartest, the best dressed. She had gone to Harvard. A lot of people go to Harvard. I didn't. They hired Kiff in marketing at the radio station where I worked, the second-biggest station in the city. She got the job through a connection. I'd been there for four years, and I was the chief engineer. It takes about ten seconds to tell whether you like a person, and when I saw her that first day, in that dress, I thought I could learn to love a woman like that. She was tall and skinny, she wore cool clothes, her chestnut-brown hair was cut short and fresh. Look at that face. Her cheeks were smooth, and the tiniest white hairs stood out against her tan skin. She had big, pink gums that were evident when she smiled. And perfect, great tits. Go ahead, I thought, Why not? We could become friends. She had just moved here from somewhere else, and I'd show her the town.

I found, upon reflection, that she fit my idea of the perfect woman. Why? Who gives a shit. I felt love.

We went on a few dates. I got to see another side of Kiffany, away from the station. She cared about people. She helped at a retarded-kids' sporting event; there were photos and T-shirts to prove it. Soon, we never spent a minute apart. We were a couple now—a thing.

Then we hit a rough spot. Someone was always on the defensive. After a while, we couldn't watch TV without that dead silence between us, making everything tense. The weeks went by, and the weeks turned into months and then into a year; soon it was Halloween, with New Year's right around the corner, honking at us like a paper party horn, and we stuck it out a little longer. We stayed apart for a while, the misery died down, and we got back together again. It was easy—and at the same time

it sucked shit. One night I locked her cat out of her apartment. It meowed at me through the window, and I gave it the finger. "Choke on a rat," I said.

I told Kiff, the day I bruised her forehead, "I love you. I'll do anything for you. My love goes so deep I can't tell you."

"Your love goes what?" she said. "Aren't you talking about your dick?"

See, I couldn't affect her. She was too intelligent. I came off as the dumb one, and when I finally got her attention, it was charity. I don't know when I began to realize it, but she made me feel ashamed—for the way I ordered food in a restaurant or for what I wanted to order. Or for talking too much to the waiter—that embarrassed her. I'd joke about something and the waiter and I would laugh, and instead of laughing, she'd stare at me, blinking. Other times, around her, I'd sit there smiling fakely, acting like the perfect boyfriend, and then I'd realize what I was doing, and I'd get furious. I'd think, What the hell am I—her slave?, and haul off and take a cheap shot at her. "Hey," I'd say, eating a piece of apple pie she'd baked. "This crust tastes like glue."

Before Kiffany, I went out with Diana, who was pretty and liked graveyards. Before her was Lisa. We never got out of bed—she never got out of bed. She never did anything except screw me and watch TV. I dated Jessica, who had rosy cheeks and flat, oily hair, and who called me my darling, my Vincent: "Could you hand me those potato chips, my darling?" Shut up. These girlfriends, they seemed to like me—sometimes it could be described as love—for anywhere from nine months to two years. I dated a girl named Kurt, who was gorgeous and rode a mountain bike. She was a lesbian but made an exception for me—she explained the switch in a long letter written on tracing paper in purple crayon—it didn't last, though. I had girlfriends as far back as nursery school. Look at all the years, and all the women, between then and now.

As I pulled into Dave's driveway in Cape May on Friday afternoon, he and Denise walked out the front door and stood with their arms around each other, watching me park the car. I went over and gave my brother a hug. He

said, "Hey." He messed up my hair. I kissed Denise.

"We're pregnant," she said, and kissed Dave's face. "Vincent, I'm so glad you're here."

"I know," I said. I went to the trunk of my car and they followed, arm in arm. Dave grabbed my suitcase, leading me toward the front door. I looked around. Their house and the yard were looking really good—perfectly manicured lawn, blooming flower beds. On my way up the driveway I'd passed a new mailbox with their names engraved on it.

"The place looks great," I said.

"Business is very good," he said.

"It must be," I said.

"It's nuts," he said. "Come on."

He showed me his office setup. I saw that he had a new computer. There was also a laptop, a new fax, a laser printer, new carpeting, and a big leather couch.

"Jesus," I said. Dave waved me on through. The living room looked different. "Check this out," he said, leading me toward the kitchen, and as we went through it I could already sense a big change—there was all this light, it looked totally screwy—and then we turned the corner, and there was a big, glass-walled addition they'd put onto the back of the house. There were plants and a leather reading chair and a glass dining-room table. The floor was made of tiles. "Wow," I said.

"Great, huh?"

"Yeah, it's nice," I said. "You didn't say anything—why didn't you tell anyone anything?"

"I wasn't sure it would happen," he said. "It was kind of down to the wire. It got sort of tricky. The builder is a client."

I nodded. We looked out the window to the yard. I said, "Is that a trampoline?"

"It's a mini-tramp," he said. "Denise works out on it."

"Aha," I said.

"She's got to have that thing to work out on every day."

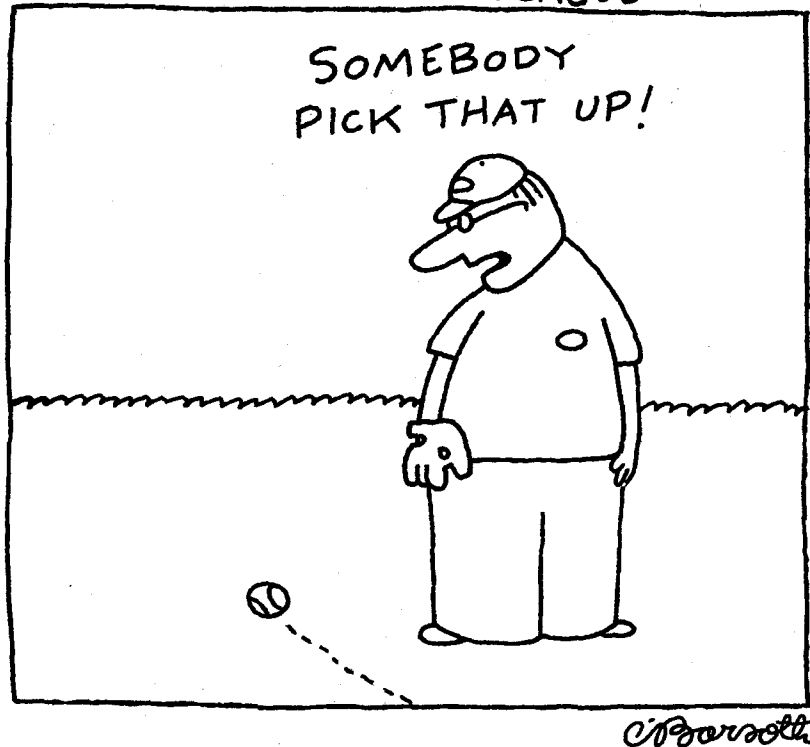
"Sure."

"I don't want her using it now, because of the baby," he said, and he smiled. "Anyway, it'll have to go someplace else. We're putting in a pool there."

"A pool? In the ground?"

He had his hands behind his back, staring straight ahead at the yard. With

EXECUTIVE SOFTBALL LEAGUE



his baseball hat and his sunglasses, he looked like an army colonel.

"Right out there," he said. He kept looking straight out.

"Fuck, man, what are you selling—drugs?"

"Image," he said. "I told you. I promote. I'm Don King without the hair."

Denise showed me to the guest room. It was still the guest room then, but soon it would be the nursery. I could already picture the little Finster in his room here, spitting his cookies on the floor.

She said they had had some tests done that day at the doctor's. They were waiting to hear. "We want to make sure everything is perfect. We don't want any surprises." I said, Of course. She leaned against the doorjamb, her long black hair pulled back. She had on a sweater and bluejeans. I asked her how everything else was. She said it was good, they were happy.

I put my stuff away and showered. I checked the cable channels. Denise shouted for me to go get the grill started out back. Dave was still on the phone in his office, with the door closed. The grill sat between two garbage cans, behind a box for recycling. I wheeled it a safe distance from the house, went back in, found some matches and lighter fluid,

and got to work. Behind me, the sun was starting to set on their neighborhood: Labor Day weekend, barbecue, the whole American scene. I waved to their neighbor, who was wrestling open a patio umbrella. The guy waved back. I was glad I'd come.

The charcoal lit right away. It was good charcoal. The flames went six feet into the air. From inside, Denise yelled, and when I looked up, sooty chemical smoke was pouring through the screen door into the house. I went over and shut the sliding glass door. I wasn't going to leave the fire unattended. Dave came out and, without speaking, got a garbage-can lid and dropped it on top of the fire.

I said, "What are you doing? What the hell?"

He pointed his thumb to a large object standing beside the glass doors, covered by black plastic. He was panting. He said, "We have a propane grill. We don't use that one anymore."

"Oh," I said. He walked over and lifted up the plastic cover. I said, "I didn't see it."

He said, "Were you planning to burn down the neighborhood?"

"It was fine," I said.

"The propane one is safer."

"O.K."

"All you've got to do is click this thing here. Let me do it. Why don't you go unpack, man?" It was a nice, new, deluxe grill. I watched him press the button and I went back inside.

Dinner that night was amazing: some of the best salmon, everything great, baby asparagus and shredded yellow something; stuffed clams, eggplant on the new propane barbecue with a marinade, fancy California wine. Denise had become this vicious cook. She'd baked rolls, and made this cheesecake with a design in it. She said she'd taken a class at the high school and then gone back and taken all the other classes.

A friend of Denise's joined us—a woman Denise had met at the health club, who owned her own vitamin store and wasn't married. Her name was Jen. She had frosted hair—it stood up on her head like a bird's wing—and throughout the evening she regaled us with health-food stories. I could see they liked her. She was short and harmless. She talked about the color of healthy urine, and they both joined in, and for a while the discussion at dinner was about urine. Any ailment, anything that ever went wrong with anybody—Jen had had it once, too, and had the answer for it in a vitamin.

In the kitchen Dave said, "Jen's got an incredible body. Sometimes she comes over and works out with Denise. You should see the fucking outfits she wears."

"Wow."

"She gives lessons on the banjo."

"No shit."

"You should go for it. Ask her out for tomorrow night."

"That's O.K.," I said. "Pass."

After we ate the cake, I said good night. It had been a long drive. Dave folded the newspaper and gave it to me. He explained to Denise and Jen that when I was a kid I used to always read for a while before turning off the lights.

SATURDAY morning, I woke up at ten and lay there, in the strange bed in the guest room. I'd slept twelve hours. I stared at the walls, glad to be out of my apartment, waiting until I was ready to get up. I'd dreamed a hundred different wacky dreams that night: my parents were sucked up in a hurricane, Kiffany was my sister and had a tattoo on her butt, a tidal wave came and washed

Dave's house away. At eleven, I heard Denise and Dave come in the front door. I went out to say hello. Denise passed me. She'd been crying so long that her face was swollen. She said good morning and disappeared into the bedroom.

Dave went toward the kitchen. I followed him. He filled a glass with water and drank it in one gulp. "Ahh," he said, and burped a dog bark. I was sitting there in the T-shirt and shorts I'd slept in.

Except for the sunglasses and the baseball hat, he looked like our grandfather. He put the glass on the counter, laced his fingers together and laid them over his stomach, shrugged one shoulder and then the other, like our father, and bit the inside of his mouth. He stayed like that, chewing on it.

"What was that?" I said.

He looked past me, toward the part of the house Denise had gone to, and filled up the glass with water again and drank it.

"You want me to get out of here?"

"No," he said.

"What's the deal?"

"There's no deal. Denise is disappointed—that's all. The doctor had the results for the tests. We just got back from there. She's not pregnant, for one."

"Oh."

"We did a home pregnancy test. Then the doctor did another test to confirm it. It came out negative." He filled the glass again.

"Geez."

"She has some chronic infection—there could be complications."

"Huh," I said. "Oh, boy." I got up and looked for a glass. Dave handed me one. I opened the refrigerator. "What kind of complications?"

"They said the infection comes from some kind of bacteria. If it's bad, she can never have kids. It would make her infertile."

"God. How did she get it?"

"She had an I.U.D. when she was in college, and it might be from that."

"I bet you feel terrible."

"It's all part of the deal. It's fine."

I took out the orange juice. Behind the opened orange juice they had two unopened backups of juice set to go. Unopened backup jars of everything. In the bathroom that morning, I'd seen fifteen bars of Ivory soap under the sink

and a case of toilet paper standing beside the john.

Dave said, "You hungry? I'll get Denise to make you something."

"No, I'm fine."

"Did you eat? Were you waiting around for us to come back before you made some food?"

"No, I just got up."

"What did you eat today?"

"I said I'm not hungry."

"My house is your house—anything here. You know that, don't you?"

"Yeah, I know."

"Toast yourself a bagel. Or—look, there's muffins here." He pulled some bags out of a drawer. "And this onion-bread thing. We've got seven boxes of cereal. Look at all this bullshit. Do you like milk on your cereal?"

"No, I like piss. Of course I like milk."

"Eat something. Now."

"O.K. Stop it. Stop talking about food. Shouldn't I do something to help?"

"Forget it. We're fine. You're our guest, Vince, and you're my brother. You make yourself something to eat. Or ask Denise. She loves making food." He poured another glass of water.

"All right," I said. "Sure."

"Good," Dave said. "I love you, Vince." He walked out of the kitchen with his sunglasses still on and the glass of water in his hand.

LATER that day, a truck pulled up and guys unloaded six chaise longues for the new pool that wasn't there yet. They were going to start work on the pool very soon. My brother walked out with the phone on his ear and pointed the men to the back of the house. I put my magazine down and tried to talk to them in Spanish. We pulled the plastic wrap off the pillows. The new chaises were very nice—made, I believe, of wrought iron, which had an intentionally aged look to it. These chairs weren't from any K mart. They were beautiful. The armrests had little patterns engraved in the metal. Each one weighed about a thousand pounds. There were big white cushions that went on top.

Dave had them set the chairs up in a row—along one side of the pool, I guess—all facing toward Denise's mini-trampoline. The only other thing back there was a bird feeder. Now, though, six people could recline in the sun and watch Denise bounce up and down. She's lovely, my sister-in-law. My brother would kill me, but I've got to



"Happy campers are all alike; every unhappy camper is unhappy in his own way. I like it!"

say it: He's always had amazing taste. Denise was a full-time aerobics instructor the first time I met her. That was a couple of years ago, but she's still got an incredible body. She's very athletic. She has a narrow face and high cheekbones. Her skin is dark and tan, her hair is long and thick, shiny black. And she's got beautiful tits, and a beautiful, round, heart-shaped ass. A great big mouth—oh, man! Anyway.

I went out and sat in one of the chairs. I brought a magazine with me, but for that entire weekend I was so exhausted that every time I sat down I felt it—as if someone had sewn lead weights into my clothes. I was tired from stress. So I opened the magazine and passed out in the sun.

I woke up a little later. The sun was farther down in the sky. Dave was beside me, with his laptop and his phone, reading through some papers. He had on his baseball hat and sunglasses. Denise was a few chairs down, in a little bathing suit. I yawned and stretched. The afternoon sunlight came streaming through the trees. Pollen dust drifted in the light, and it made sunbeams. It looked magnificent—a person could contemplate the entire universe from here. I said, "God, this is so great."

He said, "We like it pretty quiet."

I said, "Look at the light."

"I looked," he said. "Particles." He was reading, holding his chin.

I said, "Wow—it's like a postcard."

"Yeah, postcard," he said. "You snore."

"I only snore when I'm really tired."

"You always snored. How can anybody stand that? It sounds like you're drinking a milkshake through your nose."

I asked him what he was reading, but he started telling me about his public-relations business. Dave worked for himself. He said he'd acquired a specialization, and that he was putting together "a multimedia attack" for the client.

"Wow," I said. "Sounds big. How's it going?"

"It's going good."

"Well, good. What else are you working on?"

"I don't have time for anything but this right now."

"Uh-huh," I said. He nodded. I said, "I'm sure that'll change." I gave him the thumbs-up.

He shook his head. "This is my only client."

"Oh."

"No, Vin—you're not getting it. I dumped my other clients. I just work for these guys now."

"I see. Is that good?"

"Yeah, it's good. How the hell should I know?" He was pissed. He said, "I already told you on the phone."

He explained that the client's company was basically four businesses: waste management, construction, a muffler-and-shock-absorber chain, and an investment company that oversaw everything. He'd done freelance stuff for them through a bigger agency, and then at a meeting one day they asked if he would do P.R. for their company full-time. "I do everything for them—buy all the media, deal with the ad agency. A family owns it. An Italian guy and his brother-in-law run everything. Real sullen assholes."

"Really," I said. "What—no cement company?"

"Ha. Don't say that too loud. They probably have this place bugged." He laughed.

"I know. Christ, you're working for the Mafia."

He wiped his eyes with the palm of his hand and said, "But look—they're gonna make us a pool," pointing with the telephone.

I looked at the area set aside for the pool. It's hard to tell how something will be when it's finished just by looking at the ground. It would catch a lot of shade from the house. "Wait a second," I said. "Where's your sewer line? Did you get a permit for this?"

"We don't need a permit."

"Sure you do. You have to have a building permit."

"Not with these guys."

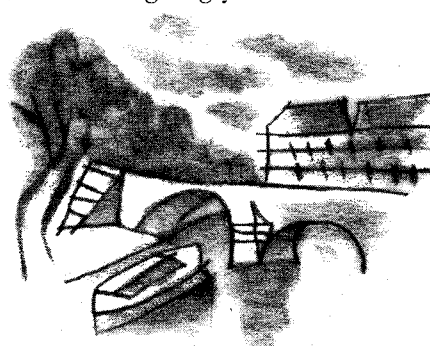
"But wait a minute—that's crazy."

"No, it's not."

"What's going on? You have to have a permit. You have to declare all this."

"Look at Mr. Painfree here, giving me advice."

"I'm not giving you advice," I said.



"Stop and think about it for a second, though. You want to put yourself in that kind of position? You're leaving yourself vulnerable."

Dave yanked his glasses off, accidentally bending them at the nose-piece. He said, "Look who's talking, fucknob. You're going to offer me advice? Your whole life is fucked up. Your last girlfriend was a bed-wetter."

"Only when she got drunk."

"Well, whatever. It's great getting advice from you, man."

The phone rang. Dave answered it. Denise got up then, and walked into the house in her bikini. Jesus. She was perfect. "Yeah," he said. "I'll hold." He put his hand over the receiver.

I said, "My whole life is fucked up?"

"I don't want your advice," he said, and unbent the sunglasses and put them back on.

LATER, I decided to go for a run behind their house. Dave told me where to find trails along a defunct canal. The woods matched his description, but the trail would open up and then take a sharp turn and end. I'd hike over some bushes and find it again, or maybe it was a different trail.

Everything was wet—the ground, the leaves. Dank and slushy. No wonder they'd built a canal back there. It seemed like the whole area was below sea level. It smelled like rank mud. It was spooky. It reminded me of how, as a kid, I was always scared. At school I was scared of other kids beating me up. At home I was scared of my dad. At night I was scared of falling off my bunk bed onto the record-player. I was a coward. I took a sharp turn and slipped and fell. My hip hit a tree root, and it hurt. I got mud on my leg—the mud was black. I remembered how much running sucks. I lost the trail completely and didn't have the common sense to believe I'd find it again a few yards up. I limped around, dirty, looking for the trail. My heart was racing.

THAT night Dave and I dined alone. It was more of the same, excellent food—fruit salad, homemade bread, bouillabaisse, but I had no cheerful setup date this time, and Denise skipped it completely and went to bed. We sat

there in silence. Dave was in a bad mood. I was thinking about other things. His problems were not my problems, and he had a whole lot of problems. That call earlier had been from his employers. When he hung up, he looked as if he was about to cry. Well, guess what. Tough shit, asshole—it's your life. You picked it. Nobody forced him to work for a bunch of gorillas.

Dinner was kind of gubby, the two of us reading the newspaper at the table, not talking, cutting farts. I picked my teeth and flicked the stuff on the floor. It was depressing. God-damned morbid. Then, after dinner, Dave did more work. I read my magazine. It just depressed me more. I wanted to help somehow.

I got on the phone and made some calls, looking for a Labor Day celebration. After an hour, the closest thing I'd found was a Norwegian party at the Rotary Club on Sunday and a keg toss Monday at a horse stable. Then Dave came and sat next to me in the living room—he said he couldn't think. I showed him the address of the Rotary Club. He said you had to be Norwegian to get in.

Finally, we talked about their fertility problem. "It's in the doctor's best interest to scare us, but Denise probably just has some stupid infection that they can clear up in a week," he said.

"Of course."

"She's probably fine. I'm sure that's what it is. Denise comes from a healthy family."

I agreed. I thought he was right.

But what if they were unlucky and there was damage, Dave said, and she couldn't have a child? I asked if he'd leave her. "No," he said, "and if she ever left me I think I'd die." Then he went on to name the options: Adopt a baby—he figured they'd qualify as pretty fit parents. Or find a host mother and give her some money. Or—he

didn't know—no kids and more hobbies.

"Sure," I said.

"I'll buy a moped."

"I don't think they make mopeds anymore."

"I mean, this is the whole reason we got married and rushed and bought the house—for the kids." I nodded. He bit his finger. "Maybe it's my fault. We've been trying for a while." I didn't say anything. "A long time."

"How long?"

"I'm getting worried."

"Don't worry. There's nothing wrong with you."

"How can I be sure? Nobody ever got pregnant from me." I was nodding, trying to be understanding. "Maybe I'm shooting blanks. Maybe I took too many drugs in college."

"What drugs?"

"I smoked pot."

"Pot doesn't do anything."

"Think about all those gay guys out there with good sperm who don't even use it."

"They use it."

"How do you know?"

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It wouldn't surprise me. It's the only

thing with two legs left for you to conquer. Anyway, Denise and I were talking—if there's something wrong with me and we need a donor, would you do it?"

"Do what?"

"Be the donor, stupid. In the event that mine's no good."

That thought hadn't occurred to me. We do have two sisters, but that's useless in this situation. Dave didn't say anything. He had a sad look in his eyes.

"Whatever you need," I said.

"We'd have to test you for everything. No offense."

"Yeah," I said.

"Good," he said.

"No problem," I said.

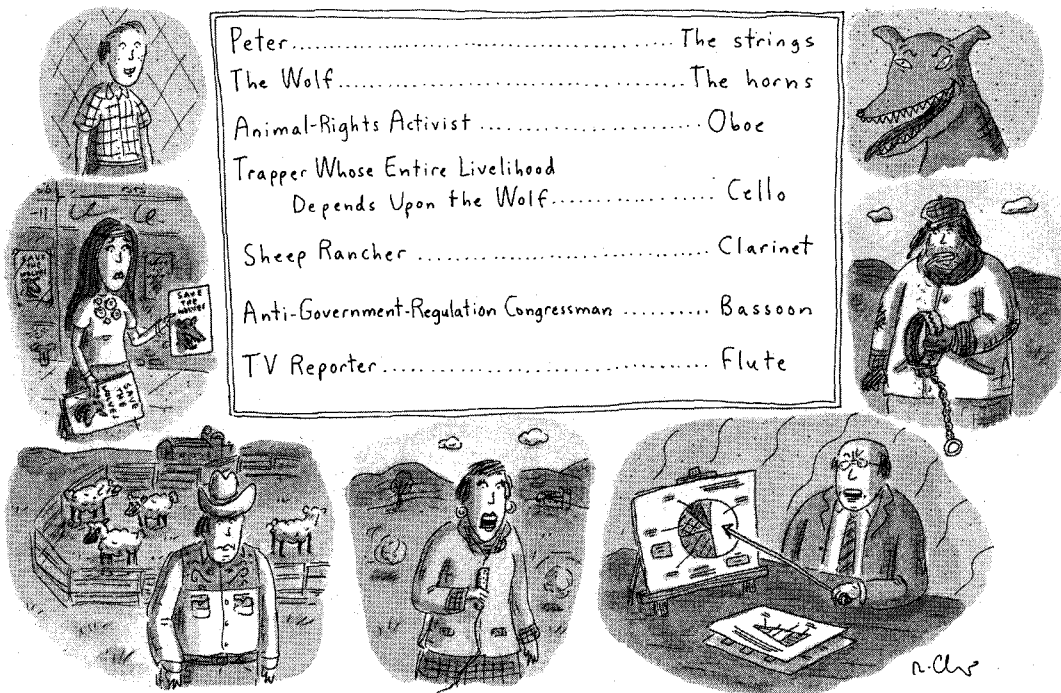
"That's settled," he said. "I don't want to talk about it anymore."

"O.K.," I said. He took the magazine out of my hand. He rolled it up and said, "Whatever you're thinking, stop thinking it."

"I'm not thinking it."

"The doctor does the transfer, not you." He started to get pissed. "Getting worked up" is what we call it in my family, pistols firing off every ten

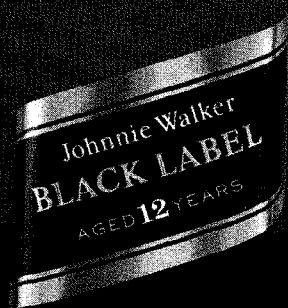
PETER AND THE WOLF, 1995



IT'S NOT
TRESPASSING
WHEN YOU CROSS YOUR OWN
BOUNDARIES.



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THERE'S MORE TO EXPLORE IN BLACK.
The resonating taste whispers beyond the expected.

seconds. Watch out, run for cover. He said, "Stop smiling."

"Didn't I mention that I'm a doctor?"

"Shut up, asshole."

"I'm not smiling. I had to yawn. You brought it up, idiot. Not me."

"O.K., forget I said it." I didn't answer him. "How's the article?" He handed the magazine back to me.

"It's O.K. I haven't gotten very far," I said. It was an article about how much money you should give bums. Dave nodded. He didn't care one single shit about good writing.

We sat there biting the insides of our mouths. Then we said a few more things and went to bed. I didn't feel like going to bed—it was still early—but my brother went around and shut off all the lights in the house. I waited until ten o'clock and phoned Kiff from Dave's office.

She said she was on her way out. I asked her how the bruise on her head was. I whispered, because Dave and Denise were sleeping. She said it had disappeared. She asked me if I was glad to be there. "Yeah," I said. "They're getting a pool."

"That's good," she said.

"They have an incredible life here."

"I'm glad," she said, but I could tell by her voice how sad she was. I said, "That was the worst thing I ever did in my life—you know? How can I tell you how sorry I am?"

"It's O.K."

"Anybody else did that to you, I'd kill him."

"Yeah—isn't that funny?" she said.

"No, it's not," I said. "Nothing's funny about it."

"Oh, Vince," she said.

"I'm sorry."

"Me, too."

So it was ten o'clock on Saturday night, and Kiffany was going out. She didn't say where or with who. I didn't ask. It didn't necessarily mean anything. It couldn't be that there was someone else. I'd just seen her a few days earlier. After a minute, thank God, I hung up. My stomach was hurting. I tried to burp, but then I remembered reading that burping was bad for stomach pains.

I went to the kitchen and got some potato chips and took them back to my

room and sat there in front of the TV. I was still stuffed from dinner. I ate so many for so long—I don't know how many; it was a big bag—that when I got up to change the channel I was nauseated, and my stomach swung like a watermelon, and the bag was still pretty full. How many potato chips is that—a thousand? A million? The numbers don't do it justice. I felt like I'd eaten sand.

I shut the TV off and got into bed. I fell asleep but after an hour woke up suddenly, not drowsy, wide awake. I felt electrified. I turned the TV back on and thought about my conversation with Dave from before. Sure, it was unlikely—it was a long shot they'd ever need my help. Or would they? Dave smoked a lot of herb in college. Maybe it zapped his supply. Here was my older brother, really scared, and I was his confidant—me, his crummy little brother. What if they did need me? I'd be the father. All of a sudden I was Dave's confidant and possibly a whole lot more. Dave and Denise and me, Uncle Vince, and my semen. I lay there in the guest room, thinking random thoughts, like what if I suddenly went blind in five years. Would I use a cane or a dog? Would the kid come and see me? Would the state provide me with adequate housing? Medicaid would never pay for a prostitute, but could I find a nurse somewhere to give me hand jobs? Then I came up with a new way to arrange the equipment in the recording studio at work. I could order this special stacking table. There was a bunch of backlog we could dump.

We would be so close, Denise and Dave and me; still, despite my pledge of loyalty to Dave, I would indeed be the father. He took a risk in asking for my help. Maybe one day, when my kid was forty, I'd pull him aside and tell him. "Son," I'd say, "sit down." That would be cool. No, maybe not. Anyhow, I had given my worthless word to do this, because that's what Dave and Denise wanted, and you don't shortchange your family. I wanted to do it. I wanted to help so badly. I was dying to be of service in their embarrassing time of need.

I lay there in the pitch dark, out of breath, practically. I started singing that old Tom Jones thing, "It's not unusual to be loved by anyone." The next line I



"Well, it certainly explains why everyone's so nice!"

thought of—"It's not unusual to be drugged by anyone"—came out in this high-pitched voice like a sixth grader's, so I stopped.

SUNDAY morning, I got up after ten. I was still tired. Maybe I was tired from oversleeping. My hip was sore from falling on that damned root. My hair was dirty. I thought about showering. I wondered if I'd be able to go back home after Labor Day and do what I'd been doing before, with Kiffany and work. I couldn't picture it. I sat down and opened the Sunday paper. I thought I was the only one in the house. Then Denise came up from the basement with laundry. She handed me a folded pile of my clothes. She must have picked them up off my floor and washed them. "Wow, thanks," I said.

I asked her where Dave was. She said he had a meeting, and went into the kitchen. I followed her. "Hey, let me help," I said. "Put me to work. I've been sitting on my ass long enough."

She was smiling, but I knew what she thought of me: she thought I was a dope. And she was married to the brother of a dope. She put her apron on. There was flour all over the counter. I sat down on a stool. She tied the apron around the front.

"It's not work," she said. "I like baking."

Denise had her hair down. Her cheeks were smooth, like girls' in high school. Underneath the apron she was wearing a yellow track sweatshirt that had been mine ten years ago. Dave must have stolen it from me. Her nice boobs came up around the top part of the apron. She looked good in everything.

I said, "What are you doing?"

"I'm making muffins. I'm about ready to screw this up."

"What kind of muffins?"

"Pumpkin," she said. "I think there's a mistake in the recipe." She was reading the recipe carefully, rubbing flour around on her hands. She had long fingernails and nail polish. Women claim long fingernails get in the way, but these didn't. From where I sat, I could smell Denise's perfume, or her shampoo, whatever that odor was—Denise's smell. It smelled beautiful. When you're not around them you forget. Man, I was so hard up. I was dying for something. She went to the refrigerator and opened it,

and I looked at her sweet ass. She had on running shorts, they were slit on the sides, and the top parts of her thighs were incredible—firm, yet round and cute. She took out a bowl and dumped some dough on the floury part of the counter.

"Is that for the muffins?"

"No. I'm making bread, too."

She picked up the dough and looked at me. Such blue eyes. It made thinking impossible. I wanted to give my sister-in-law a kiss. On the mouth. Take her into my arms, hold her face, and ram my tongue down her throat. She put her hand up to her head, and when she pulled it away there was flour in her hair.

"What the hell," she said.

"What?"

"What if we can't have kids?"

"Nah," I said. "You're fine."

Her eyes filled with tears. "I've heard there are doctors who exaggerate to get the most money."

"That's true," I said. "It happens a lot. Don't worry."

She wiped her eyes. "If my uterus is damaged, I might not be able to have a baby."

I nodded. Dave had explained that to me the night before. She said, "See, a woman has a lot of fragile parts inside. There's the vagina, and then there's the cervix, and the uterus—"

"Calm down," I said.

"Jesus Christ," she said.

I said, "Dave thinks it's him."

"It's not him. He's paranoid."

"That's what I told him."

"I've been thinking about this non-stop. I feel like my brain is on fire."

"It's not," I said.

"I lie in bed thinking about it all the time. I feel like I have cancer."

"You don't have cancer," I said.

She cursed again. "Tuesday I go back, and they do it. They tell you right away."

"Uh-huh," I said. She flung the dough around, doing judo on it.

"I'll be so glad when this is over. You know what I mean?"

"Sure, absolutely. Look, Denise, I want to help. I can help."

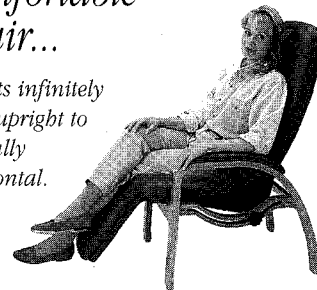
"That's nice of you."

"That's not what I mean," I said.

She said, "Dave and I would have the most beautiful baby," and all of a sudden she burst into tears. I just sat

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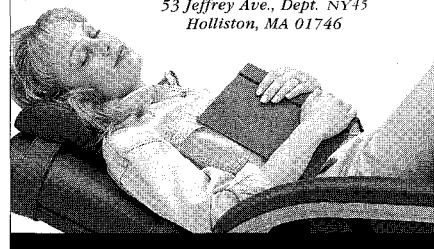
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there with her crying. "We're not really going to be denied this, are we?" she said. Denise looked right at me, eyes filled with tears. She held her hand out, palm up, as if she was begging for change. I didn't know what she wanted. The whole thing was making me sweaty. Tears dropped off either side of her mouth into flour on the counter.

"No, no way." I hopped off the stool and went to the bathroom for a tissue. I handed it to her.

She said, "I don't care how many we have."

"I know," I said. "It'll be fine." She asked if I was being sincere. I told her yes.

I stood beside her and got involved in the baking. In a little while, we put

the dough in a pan and the pan in the oven. I suggested she shelve the muffin idea for another time. She wiped her face with her apron. I made a pot of tea, and we sat in the new room and drank it, surrounded by glass walls and plants. Denise's face was puffy. She held a crumpled napkin in her hand. I did imitations of her and Dave yelling: "Denise, where are my damned socks?"—"Gee, I don't know, Dave, they're your socks." Her eyes were bloodshot. Tears poured out and ran down her cheeks when she laughed.

DAVE came back. He went past us to the sink and got out the bottle of aspirin, without noticing that Denise had been crying. He said he was going

back to bed. We followed him as far as the living room. He threw his briefcase onto the couch and sat down on an antique needlepoint chair. Denise sat near him, on the couch, reaching her hand over both of his.

I said, "How did the meeting go?"

"Good."

"Everything's O.K.?" I said.

"It's going good, it's going good. How does somebody gauge that? It's going O.K. to me."

Denise leaned over and kissed his cheek. She combed the back of his hair with her hand. He looked at her and laughed. He wiped his nose. She said, "Did they serve you food or anything?"

"Cookies and iced tea."

I said, "It wasn't a long meeting."

"No. I showed them the new campaign. They bought that." He looked at the coffee table. "What can I say? We met at the brother-in-law's house. He owns a Doberman pinscher. It was fine. It's going great. Everybody relax."

"O.K.," I said. "Nobody's asking."

"They're boring. Stupid fucking meatballs."

"Uh-huh," I said.

"My neck is sore," he said, and reached back and rubbed it. "It kills me that these people have so much money and I don't."

"We have enough money," Denise said.

"Not like this. It breaks my heart. You wouldn't believe what the family's worth—and they're all morons. The men wear these necklaces. The wives keep getting nose jobs. What a mentality. Did I tell you about their art?"

We said no.

"The brother-in-law's an art collector," he said. "He collects dogs. Anything that has to do with dogs. He's got carved dogs, stuffed dogs, wooden dogs, paintings of dogs. He's even got a dalmatian-covered sofa. It must not be real. Or maybe it is—who knows?" Dave looked at me. I shrugged. He went on. "They have this lamp, and the base of the lamp is a dog pissing on a fire hydrant, and a little boy squatting next to it." I laughed. He said, "I hate working for these guys."

Denise kissed the back of Dave's hand. "I'm sorry," she said.

He said, "You know what I do? My secret for success with them? I throw away my good ideas. I don't even bother

showing them, and I write the corniest crap I can think up. We're doing a promotion with the muffler chain, so this morning I said, 'Instead of calling it a sale, let's call it a carnival.' It was the stupidest thing I could think of. I said, 'We'll decorate our stores like the Mardi Gras.' So Carlo calls the Meathead and the Grandma in and we all have a Sambuca at nine o'clock in the morning." Dave laughed.

I said, "Sambuca?"

"He needed help with the concept. The grandmother doesn't even fucking speak English. She's from Romania or someplace."

Dave leaned back, laughing, stretching with his hands over his head. His baseball hat fell off, backward. He'd become almost bald, and his hair was all stuck down. "What's an eighty-year-old grandma gonna know about mufflers?" he said. He was giggling in a high-pitched voice. His eyes teared, and he smeared them with his fingers. He stretched, sticking his chest out, and the needlepoint chair he sat on creaked, and then a noise came from underneath it—a screech like wood being pulled apart. He sat forward. He said, "Shit—am I breaking this chair?"

Denise smiled, but she didn't move.

He said, "Has it always wobbled like this?" He shook it.

Denise said, "It's very old. It's not worth anything."

"I've got to get away from those guys," he said. He rubbed his head. "They're destroying my brain." I nodded, listening to him rave. "I hate this kind of work," he said. "What a waste of a year."

My tea had cooled a little, so I drank it. "It sounds like you want to quit," I said. He looked up at me. "So why don't you quit and stop crying?"

"Oh, fuck you."

"O.K. Sorry, forget it," I said.

"I can't quit," Dave said. He stood up and took a tissue out of his pocket. He unfolded it and blew his nose. I watched him. He had no energy. Outside I heard a lawnmower running somewhere.

"Ah, Vinny," he said, and sat down again. The chair creaked again. It sounded like a bird squawking. He kept looking at me.

"What?" I said.

"Little Vinchi," he said. I didn't say

anything. "Isn't that what I used to call you?"

"Don't call me that."

"O.K., whatever. Don't get excited. What happened to my hat?"

Denise leaned over and kissed his bicep. "It's behind you," she said.

Dave crumpled the tissue up and threw it over his shoulder onto the floor.

WE had a last, quiet dinner that night, of all the great leftovers. Monday morning I packed up. On my way out, I saw they had wheeled one of those beautiful new chaises to the front of the house. Dave said it was mine. I don't know what I did to deserve it. He helped me strap it to the roof of my car. He said they didn't need six. I put the cushions in the trunk, careful not to get any dirt on them. Of everything I owned, this would be my nicest possession. Then we all said goodbye in the driveway.

I cruised up the Garden State Parkway. It was sunny and hot out, with that beautiful chair above me, shuddering in the wind. I kept looking up to make sure it was still there. When I got home, I put the new chair in my apartment, next to a table with a plant on it. Then I sat down and wrote my brother a note. The chair was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen, and I said so. I thought of them, down there, going to the doctors. At last, after all these years, I knew more about Dave than I wanted to.

KIFFANY and I finally broke up for good. When I think about it now, it seems normal to be away from her, but I haven't stopped loving her yet, and that's a pain in the ass. Probably the best thing to do is scope out somebody else, and try to make it different this time. I've walked by Kiffany's every day, to and from work. I've seen guys' cars in her driveway, and I've thought about going over there with a real gun—maybe I'd put on camouflage face paint and boots, some cologne for effect, walk right in there and shoot them in the middle of their pizza. But what's that? Definitely not love in a derivative form.

At work we stayed away from each other, and then, a few months ago, her whole department moved across the street. It's over now between us, and that's the best anybody can hope for. ♦

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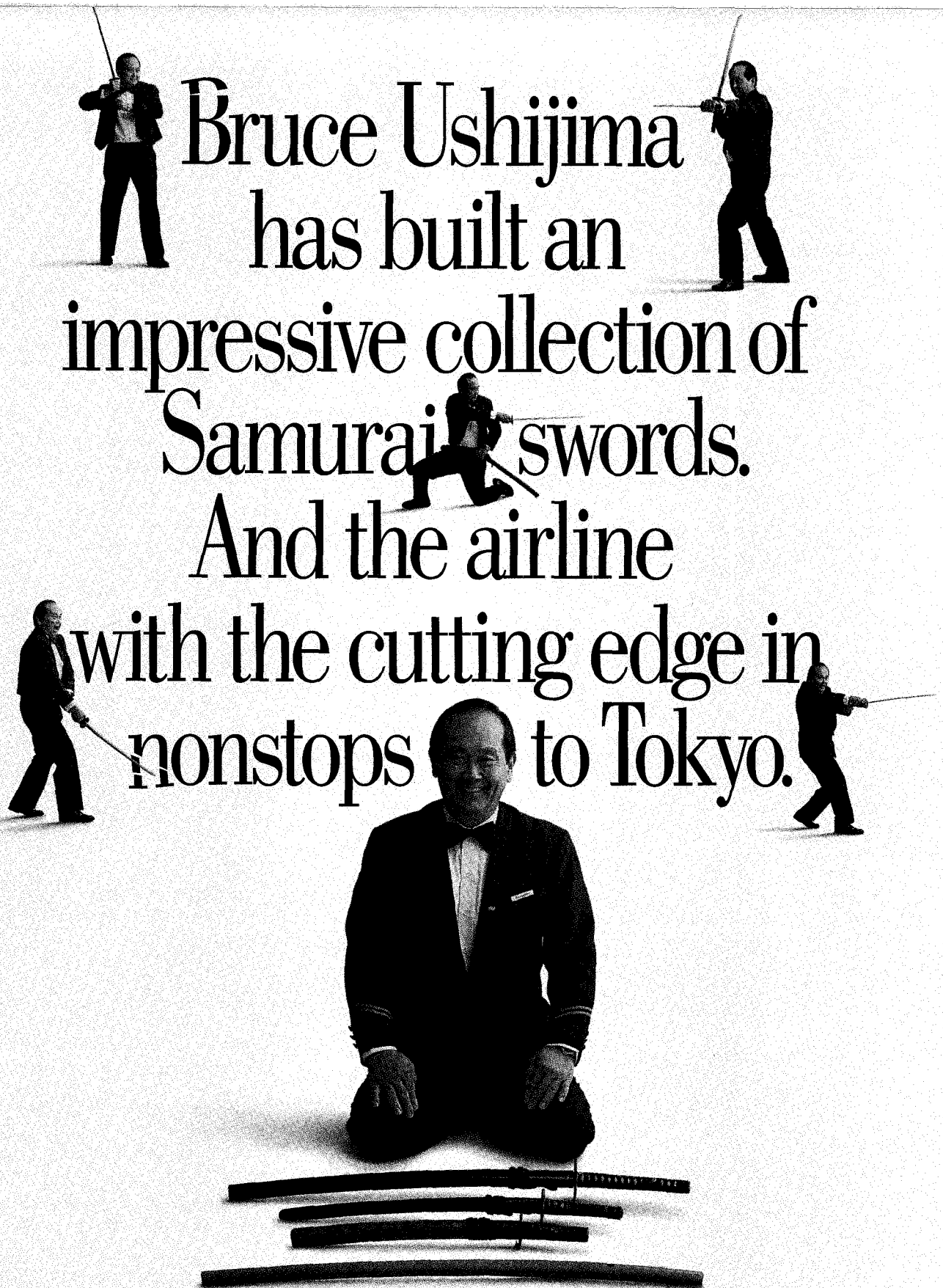


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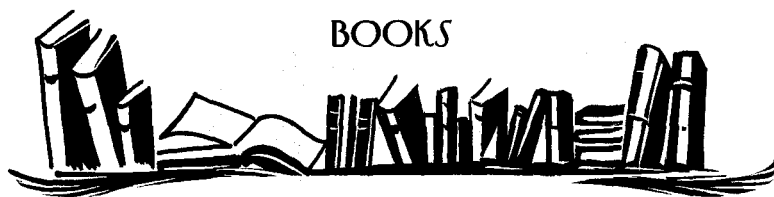
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A LION AT HIS DESK

A biography takes on Edmund Wilson's greatest subject: his own life.

BY ELIZABETH HARDWICK

EDMUND WILSON, one of our country's supreme men of letters, is sometimes remembered as being autocratic and intimidating. My own memory, not the most intimate, is of a cheerful, chuckling, corpulent gentleman, well dressed in brown suits and double Martinis. As a literary and cultural critic, Wilson produced more than two dozen books on an astonishing range of subjects. And, beyond that, every scrap of his diaries, his memoirs, and his letters appears to have been collected and published. He wrote about himself, his friends, his wives, his love affairs, his days and nights—sometimes transforming his observations into fiction or essays but most often simply preserving them in his voluminous daily jottings. Since the author left so few gaps in the record of his life, it is not surprising that the present biography, by Jeffrey Meyers (Houghton Mifflin; \$35), is the first he has received.

A "first" is something of a rarity for the very productive Meyers: he has written eight other biographies, their subjects including Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, Robert Lowell, and Katherine Mansfield. In this field of study, each new digger needs to explore the previously looted pharaonic tombs in search of an overlooked jewel in the stone eyes prepared for eternity; and this holds true even for a first biography when the subject is as precise a documentarian as Wilson. Perhaps there is an unpublished letter or two, an untaped acquaintance, a peculiarity belatedly recalled by a passing stranger; or perhaps the compulsion to anatomize the "life" of a celebrated author is stronger than any desire for novelty. Meyers' is sort of an assembly-line effort, which mingles discussions of Wilson's books with the calendar of events of the time. Critical judgment is supplied by the reviews ly-

ing about in the attic of magazines and newspapers.

If Meyers has crossed the tape in the matter of Wilson's biography, there are others hard on his heels. The scholar Lewis Dabney has been working on Wilson for some years, and his labor is known as "authorized." What that distinction means is not always clear. Is it to be thought of as akin to the Queen of England's seal of approval to be found on Pears' soap? For a biographer, authorization seems to indicate the endorsement of family or heirs, and hence access to papers, letters, drafts, mementos, and photographs not available to all and sundry. These days, however, the archival remains of a celebrated author are usually in the hands of libraries or other research institutions, and so they are readily available to academics or others with useful credentials. Thus, biographies, one after another, are produced. Though producing them is time-consuming, they are rarely a rich source of income; but, if one is led to wonder to whom, exactly, the biographer's labors are addressed, there is always an answer—the subsequent biographer.

W. H. Auden, George Orwell, and T. S. Eliot are among those authors who pleaded that they not be subjected to biography. They are like old wanderers on the road in Russian fiction, crying, "Have mercy on me, good folk!" The prayer seems to have been heard not as a woeful call at the coming of the night but as an impertinence, even a provocation. Each got his biography, and not one but several, with the "interpretations" of Eliot's life irresistibly flowing down to "Tom and Viv" on stage and screen. Scandal—or, at least, imprudent behavior—can be found in most lives as surely as the ancestral records. It happened, didn't it—that unguarded moment or lifelong indiscretion? And so

the biographer proceeds, as if under oath to testify to the smallest detail concerning his subject. Of course, Wilson was one step ahead of his biographers, recording most of his indiscretions himself.

EDMUND WILSON, were he living now, would be a hundred years old. Celebrations, panel discussions, reminiscences, and critical papers have been planned in honor of his centenary, and the Meyers biography is itself an attempt at commemoration. Red Bank, New Jersey, was the scene of Wilson's birth, and he may be said to have put the town on the map. A great-great-grandfather on his mother's side, a Kimball, had married a Mather from New England. Meyers' book opens with the pronouncement that Wilson's "ancestors served the altars of learning and committed murders in the name of God." It is an arresting turn of phrase, but one that was penned, as Meyers omits to mention, by Wilson himself, in a 1922 letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald—a circumstance that seems to illustrate the infiltrative powers of Wilson's self-representations. Meyers continues:

He was descended from Cotton Mather, seventeenth-century puritan divine and zealous witch hunter during the Salem trials, and shared many characteristics—intellect, bookishness, linguistic ability, temperament, energy, productivity and multiple marriages—with his eminent forefather.

Wilson did share the learning and the immense productivity of his ancestor and managed to exceed him in the matter of wives, with four. Perhaps the opening of Meyers' book is meant not so much to indicate the intellectual brilliance of the two as to alert the reader to a consanguineous "arrogant manner and aggressiveness in controversy." In any case, Wilson was not a New Englander of the seventeenth century in temperament and not one of the twentieth century to feel the attraction of religion. "You are wrong, and have always been wrong, in thinking I am in any sense a Christian," he once wrote to the poet Allen Tate. "Christianity seems to me the worst imposture of any of the religions I know of."

Wilson was an only child, but he had a very well-populated family of connections. On his first trip to Europe, when he was thirteen years old, the party was large, including his parents, uncles and

aunts, and cousins. The diary in which the boy recorded the fates of each is printed in his autobiographical work "A Prelude," which takes him up to his discharge from the Army, in 1919. Meyers' "Edmund Wilson" follows more or less the chronological organization that Wilson employs in "A Prelude."

Of course, Wilson was once a young man, but he was not much like other young men. He was clumsy and bulky, short (five feet six inches), and immune to the attraction of competitive sports. At The Hill School, in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, he studied Latin, Greek, and French—without, Meyers tells us, making especially good grades but nevertheless building the foundation of his interest in languages. He went on to Princeton, and there wrote and studied, and made friends, notably Scott Fitzgerald and the scholar Christian Gauss. Princeton social life centered on the "eating clubs." "These clubs are remarkably uninteresting," Wilson wrote in the memoir. "Since I did not play billiards or bridge, there was nothing in the club house to occupy me except to sit, as I did sometimes in winter, in front of our big open fireplace and read the papers and magazines." Odd as Wilson may have been, he does not seem to have felt himself so or to have suffered from shame or anxiety about his nature or how he might appear to others.

Meyers devotes ample attention to matters literary and amorous alike. Indeed, Wilson's achievements as a literary critic are sometimes overshadowed by more controversial matters—his stormy marriage to Mary McCarthy, for example, or his writings about sex, especially in "Memoirs of Hecate County." McCarthy has written in her own memoirs of her detestation of Wilson's body and soul—a body and soul she was well acquainted with, since in 1938 she had consented to become his wife. She disguised him in satirical portraits in her fiction, though her notion of disguise is a bit on the order of sunglasses. They were divorced after a span of seven years, during which she bore a son and after which she continued to write and took on two more husbands. A marriage, however successfully escaped, lingers longer in the memory

than an old bout of flu; even so, McCarthy's preoccupation with her marriage to Wilson is extreme. "She kept driving nails into him, as if he were a pagan fetish, in order to exorcise his evil influence," Meyers writes.

Not that Wilson, in his self-portraiture, comes off as an altogether appealing creature. What was he thinking when he swayed his way home after a sexual encounter only to awaken the next day and put it all down in his diary? He was, of course, thinking of himself, the principal actor in the drama, the "I." Still, the task of recording a sexual partnership required the "I" to represent the sensations of the "she." Of Frances—a Ukrainian whom he met at a dance hall, and who was the model for Anna, the vessel of sexuality in "Hecate County"—he wrote that cunnilingus made her "weak with pleasure," and he went on about "her little mouth under the moist kisses of my mouth and my finger on her little moist cunt rubbing its most sensitive spot." Poor Frances gave Wilson gonorrhea as well as self-satisfaction; Wilson never seemed aware of the notorious skill in dissimulation acquired by women who, like Frances, are battered by life—not to mention women of genteel breeding. Wilson's voracious drinking cannot have been an ideal companion for Eros, but he, at least, seems to have had a good time.

"Memoirs of Hecate County," a work of fiction, more or less, was published in 1946, some months before Wilson's marriage to the handsome, cosmopolitan, and loyal Elena Thornton. The book, consisting of five tales and a novella, was banned for a time, but it has survived, and is probably still read because of its reputation for salaciousness as well as because of its genuine interest. It was a bizarre composition to add to an already long and commanding list of literary and cultural studies. "The Princess with the Golden Hair," as the novella was entitled, occasioned a good number of unfavorable if amusing reviews. The "princess," a remote and withholding beauty of the Pre-Raphaelite sort for whom the narrator longs, did not arouse a like yearning in many readers, despite a thorough cataloguing of her charms, once unlocked: "Her little bud was so deeply embedded that it was

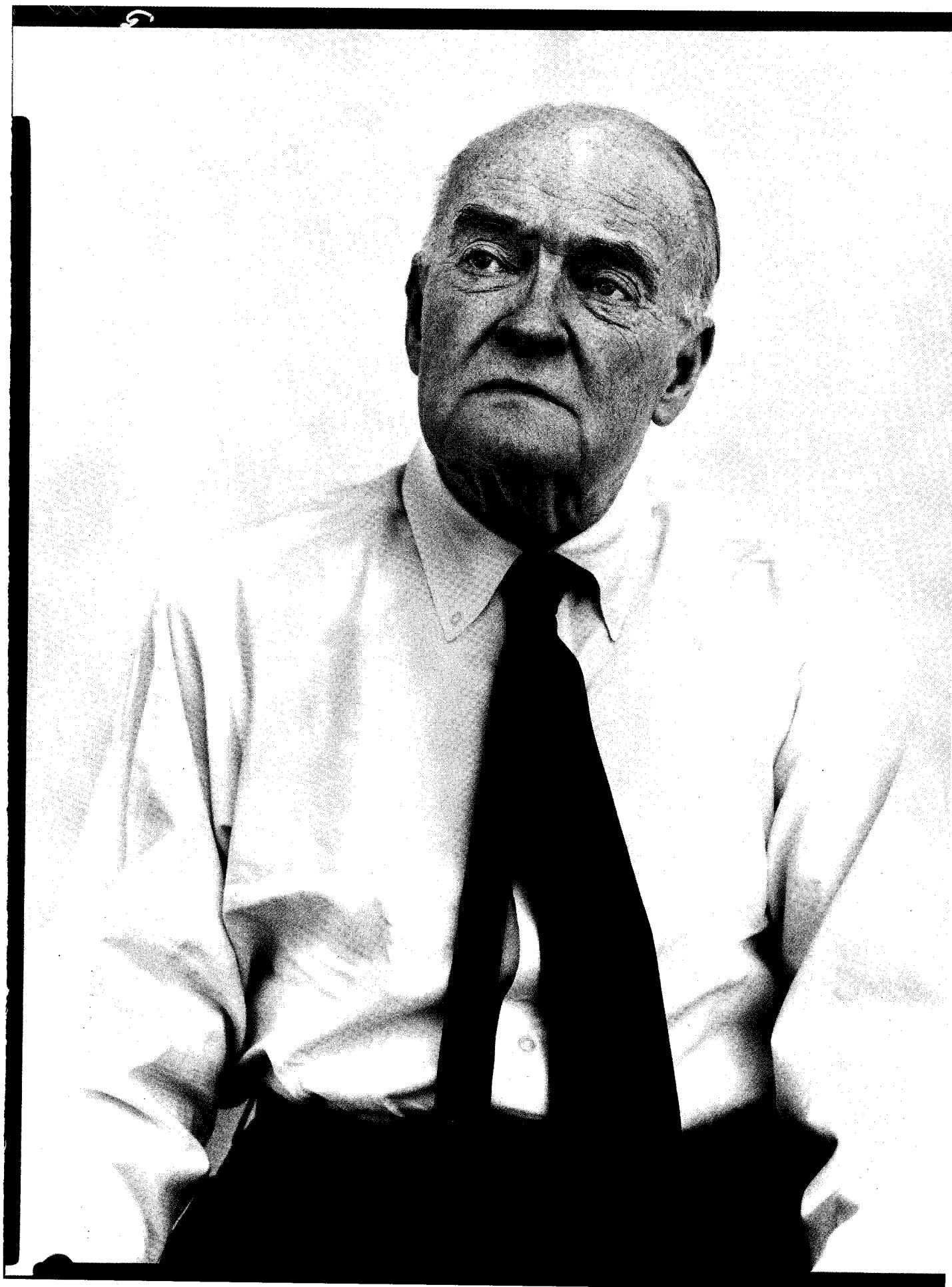
hardly involved in the play, and she made me arrest my movement while she did something special and gentle that did not, however, press on this point, rubbing herself somehow against me—and then came, with a self-excited tremor." The term "clinical" was applied to the sex writing in the fiction and also in Wilson's diaries. Cyril Connolly thought the fornications had "a kind of insect monotony"; Raymond Chandler said that Wilson managed to make "fornication as dull as a railroad timetable."

Two other tempests disturbed what peace there was in Wilson's life. One was a battle with the I.R.S.; between 1946 and 1955, he filed no income-tax returns. In 1958, a menacing notice arrived from the government, and over the next year a siege began. Perhaps he felt that, as an independent, self-employed producer of goods and sundries, he was somehow not a wage earner, required to hand over a deputed allotment with burdensome regularity. The notion of protesting the use of the nation's taxes for the Cold War and other "misappropriations"—as he would come to describe them—may well have entered his mind only later, although his distaste for militarism was sincere and vehement. Still, the affair was a comedy in the operative sense, with a distracted, tousled hero, and rogues looking for gold under the bed.

Another comedy, more interesting from the perspective of literary history and personal display, is Wilson's quarrel with Vladimir Nabokov, his friend of twenty years, about a translation that Nabokov did from the Russian of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin." Wilson had begun to study Russian after a 1935 stay in the Soviet Union, and in the late thirties he kept in practice with Russian-speaking friends, in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. So when, in 1965, Nabokov published his translation, Wilson felt amply qualified to pass judgment on the effort. (In "The Triple Thinkers," he himself translated Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman" into "prose with an iambic base.") Soon the pages of literary magazines were stuffed to grogginess with Wilson and Nabokov pronouncing on the phonological traits and prosodic traditions of Russian and English, as

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Edmund Wilson, Wellfleet, Massachusetts, May 8, 1970.



well as on each other's personal and literary qualities.

Twenty years earlier, Wilson had reviewed a book by Nabokov on Gogol—one of the most exhilarating and original works ever produced by one writer about another—with a generous degree of appreciation and a scattering of reservations. Those reservations are the clue to an irreconcilable difference between the two writers' sensibilities. Wilson finds himself annoyed by Nabokov's "poses, perversities and vanities," when it is those "perversities"—the imaginative cascade of images and diversions—which are the glory of Nabokov's writing. After the 1941 publication of "The Real Life of Sebastian Knight," Nabokov's first novel in English, Wilson was generally "disappointed" in Nabokov's work. Ten years later, he dismissed "Lolita": "I like it less than anything else of yours I have read."

Some light on Wilson's disaffection is shed by his "Patriotic Gore." The book, a dazzling monument in our national culture, is a study of the literature of the Civil War, which Wilson published, after years of work, in 1962. In a chapter on American prose, he develops the argument that American writing abandoned the cultivated standards of the eighteenth century and, in the first half of the nineteenth, fell into deplorable exaggeration and rhetorical display, arising from models such as the sermon and the public address. Wilson's appraisal of the prose style of some of our masterpieces is scathing, and might stand equally as an indictment of Nabokov's style:

There is nothing in the fiction of Hawthorne to carry the reader along: in the narrative proper of "The Scarlet Letter," the paragraphs and the sentences, so deliberately and fastidiously written, are as sluggish as the introduction with its description of the old custom house. The voyage of the "Pequod" in "Moby Dick," for all its variety of incident and its progression to a dramatic end, is a construction of close-knit blocks which have to be surmounted one by one; the huge units of "Billy Budd," even more clottedly dense, make it one of the most inappropriate works for reading in bed at night, since it is easy to lose consciousness in the middle of one.

In Wilson's view, it took the tragedy of the Civil War to precipitate a break with grandiloquence and return American prose to the virtues of sobriety, terseness, lucidity, and precision. (Among the work he takes to be exem-

plary of these virtues are the stories of Ambrose Bierce and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.) Indeed, Wilson's own compositions are wonderful in their clarity and balance, at hand to express the large capacity of his mind and experience, whether the subject be a new book, a work of literature, the Russian Revolution, or the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Both the strengths and the limitations of Wilson's critical sensibilities are perhaps best illustrated by the chapter in "The Wound and the Bow" (1941) on Charles Dickens. It moves between the challenge of Dickens' novels and his life with a speculative and interrogative ease that is altogether remarkable. The title of the collection was suggested by Sophocles' play "Philoctetes," and the thematic tenor is that the sufferings and the traumas in the lives of artists have a deep connection with the release of creativity. In the case of Dickens, the "wound" that Wilson explores is well known: the family fell on hard times, and the boy was taken out of school and sent to work in a blacking factory—a cruel, degrading, and forever damaging move. Even when the elder Dickens received a legacy, the family did not immediately take the boy out of the factory and return him to school—a lapse he could never forgive. This "wound" in his youth is naturally seen as the basis for Dickens' hatred of cruelty to children and his contempt for knavery, social and intellectual pretense, moneygrubbing, and lying—all embodied in a host of characters, an army invading London. These characters have their opposites in good, long-suffering, generous little people and sometimes good big people. Indeed, Wilson sees Dickens' childhood wound as explaining precisely this duality, and Dickens' corresponding inability to create characters with mixed motives.

So there is the "wound," but where, in Wilson's essay, is the "bow"—Dickens' style? You find nothing about that writer's breathless flow of adjectives, metaphors, and similes. And a lack of interest in richly metaphoric prose is a general limitation of Wilson's critical approach. Still, for all the practicality of his literary method, Wilson could be unpredictable, and never more so than in his embrace of Joyce's "Finnegans Wake"—another language to learn, as it were. Joyce's "fancywork virtuosity" gains rebukes, but no matter: Wilson

brings to "Finnegans Wake" a beaming affection and solicitude.

QUEEN ELIZABETH I said, "Old age came upon me as a surprise, like a frost." It was not thus with poor Wilson, who suffered a painful slow decline—heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and stroke. Yet he was always heroically at his desk, complaining but ever going on. In 1969, he published "Upstate," reflections on his life in Talcottville, in upstate New York, where his treasured ancestral home, the Old Stone House, was situated. The work offended some of the people it portrayed—among them Nabokov, just as the two writers were edging toward rapprochement. (A diarist does not consider that living persons may not wish to sit inadvertently for their portraits like prisoners under the control of the turnkey.) Wilson died in 1972 in Talcottville, and was cremated and buried in Wellfleet. If his ashes were in the ground, above it there was much to be gathered and published—the testament of a lifelong dedication. According to an account written by Wilson's first child, Rosalind, when the news of his death reached Elena, his widow, she was heard to cry out, "Where are the diaries? Where are the diaries?"

Wilson's diaries were published posthumously, edited and arranged by decade—"The Twenties," "The Thirties," and so on up through "The Sixties." They are a phenomenal exercise of creative, intellectual, and physical energy, all the more remarkable in having been produced by one who was forever publishing reviews, essays, and books and undertaking exhausting journeys all over the world. Throughout his life, here and abroad, Wilson was acquainted with a great number of distinguished people, and many became attached to him, for his charm, his knowledge, his vivid conversation; and they, in turn, enliven the pages of his diaries. The diaries also show a latitudinarianism in Wilson, an open spirit that was not displaced by the gruffness he at times displayed. Thus, as he writes about his daily life he will give many pages to his distant relatives the Munns, an old farming family near Talcottville.

The diaries are not different in style from his professional work. Indeed, the literary articles, written for *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, and other magazines—collected in "Classics and Com-

mercials," "The Shores of Light," and "The Bit Between My Teeth"—are scarcely diminished if we think of them as the diaries of a literary man at his desk, with texts to be examined, an author's life to be pondered in much the same way that Wilson pondered the vast army of acquaintances who passed his way.

Where do the Wilson diaries and journals stand in the history of the form? It has become something of a commonplace to compare Wilson's journals to those of the Goncourt brothers. Like Wilson's, the Goncourts' diaries assemble a wide range of talent (Flaubert, Zola, Gautier, and Daudet, among others); but their scene is confined to Paris, which was certainly the place to be at the time. The settings are restaurants—Magny's, especially—and other "gatherings" typical of French intellectual life. And then there was the Goncourts' graduation, when they joined the salon of the Princess Mathilde Bonaparte. By contrast, America did not offer the restaurant as a meeting place, or evenings at illustrious houses, and certainly not a salon. Here a salon is a place to get your hair done.

Wilson's diaries transcend merely archival interest; they are among his principal achievements. For the biographer, though, they represent a conundrum: on the one hand, they are an invaluable resource, but, on the other, they are a formidable rival. Their author lives on every page—an effect that few biographers manage to achieve for their subjects. Jeffrey Meyers has produced a long book, nearly five hundred pages. There is a lot of Wilson to be sifted here, and so there is a lot of Meyers. A great many bricks of Gradgrind fact, whether laudatory or dismissive, are bound to destroy the fluid nature of human lives, yet facts are the stuff of biography. Meyers has brought together the grand flow of Wilson's work and life, including all the flirtations, the drinking, and the marital discord. But he has not been able to recreate in his own pages his subject's brilliant mind and spirit. And so we bid farewell to the unlikely presence in our literature of an irreplaceable thinker and writer. Farewell, that is, until the next time, courtesy of Professor Dabney. ♦

RUNAWAY

A veteran writer's new novel is a real departure.

BY TOM SHONE

ANNE TYLER's thirteenth novel, "Ladder of Years" (Knopf, \$24), opens in a dense fog of familiarity. Delia Grinstead is a forty-year-old Baltimore housewife, bored with Baltimore, bored with her husband, Sam, is the sort of man who, for the sake of efficiency, wears tomorrow's underwear to bed—grounds enough for divorce on its own, you might have thought, but Delia has become numbed by routine. Early on, we see her dutifully responding to messages on her answering machine before realizing, too late, that the messages are



Anne Tyler

last week's, and, more to the point, that she *answered* them last week.

Keen Tyler readers will perhaps find Delia's tape loop of a life even more familiar than she herself does. Sam joins a long, orderly line of male pedants in Tyler's fiction, and Delia bears many similarities to past Tyler heroines. But for those readers who suspect that she could have walked out of any one of Tyler's previous novels, "Ladder of Years" has a shock in store: Delia keeps on walking. On a seaside holiday with her family in Delaware, she takes a stroll along the waterfront, doesn't bother to stop, and marches off in her swimsuit to find herself a new

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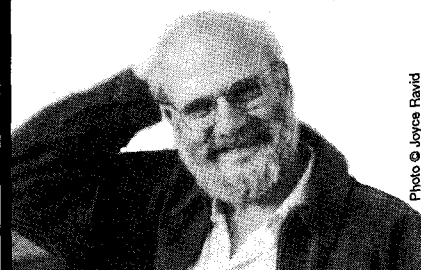


Photo © Joyce Ravid

Oliver Sacks AN ANTHROPOLOGIST ON MARS

Neurological patients, Oliver Sacks has said, are travellers to unimaginable lands. Now he introduces us to seven such travellers in a book that is everywhere acclaimed

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—Washington Post Book World

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—NY Times Book Review

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for a Hat* and *Awakenings*

Knopf 

Most of the contents of this book originally appeared in
The New Yorker.

life. Sam and the kids are left beached.

That Delia—the name is a shortening of Cordelia—is the youngest of three sisters is a nice nod to another of literature's domestic deserters. The Lears would, you realize, have been right at home in a Tyler novel: a quick airlift from seventeenth-century Britain to twentieth-century Baltimore, and they would surely have re-started their bickering with barely a pause for breath. Tyler has spent her career in close orbit around such families, finding world enough in their tiffs and truces, their petty wranglings, rankings, and ranklings. Certainly she has written before about characters who have kicked themselves free of their family's queasy gravitational pull, but she has generally done so from the point of view of those left behind. "Ladder of Years" reverses this perspective. Delia may not take much with her when she walks off, but she remembers to bring along her author.

If, however, you're expecting a rerun of "Shirley Valentine," with Delia letting her hair down and then mussing it in a sandy romantic tumble, you've come to the wrong novel. There *is* a man involved in Delia's departure—a month or so before she leaves, a stranger in a supermarket asks her to pose as his girlfriend in order to taunt his estranged wife, who is up ahead, in Potatoes—but the incident is no more than a catalyst for her flight. And, yes, Delia starts out from a beach, but she winds up in the small inland town of Bay Borough, zips herself into a prim gray dress, and gets a secretarial job with a local lawyer. This

unambitious trajectory feels just right—a defiance not of Delia's old life but of the cliché that would make such defiance her only option. An author less capable of condescending to her characters than Tyler would be hard to find; throughout "Ladder of Years" she never once breaks her pact with Delia's natural passivity, and nothing in the novel feels more real than the ease with which her heroine, having slipped the noose of her old existence, sets about tightening the knot of her new one. "Ladder of Years" serves as an object lesson that momentum and inertia are kindred forces: Delia gets herself a still-life.

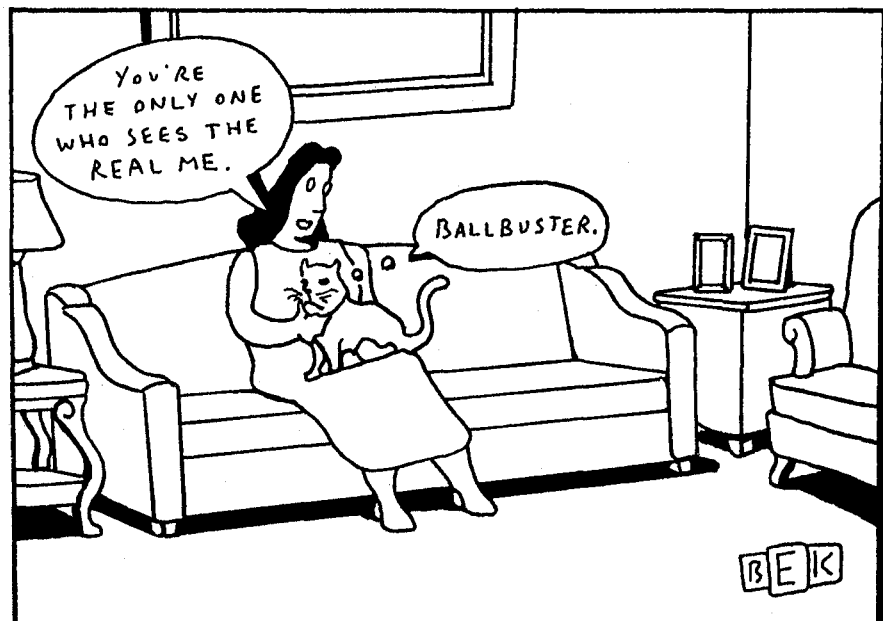
In fact, Bay Borough resembles nothing so much as a reunion of Edward Hopper sitters, meeting up in order to resume their paralyzed poses once again, for old times' sake—the weight of the intervening years serving to pin them to their diner seats and motel beds with even greater force. "Almost everybody here had run away from," Delia notes. She fits right in, of course, no questions asked: if the day finds her hunched over a typewriter, the night finds her sitting in her rented bedroom, fingers pressed to lips, or else efficiently turning the pages of a library book. Tyler works these minimalist details to maximum effect: Delia's taste for supermarket-rack romances gives way to a brief dalliance with the classics, but eventually she settles on a diet of short stories, as if her solitude were seeking out suitably attenuated accompaniment.

"Ladder of Years" is itself one of the most pared-down novels Tyler has written in a long time—a potential source of

dissatisfaction, perhaps, for those readers hooked on the genial expansiveness of her writing. Leaving family-pack fiction behind her, Tyler seems animated by the desire to strip a single life down to degree zero—to work out a math of human happiness. "She had always known that her body was just a shell she lived in, but it occurred to her now that her mind was yet another shell," Tyler writes. "She was clearing out her mind to see what was left." The pace of the book's middle section is daringly slow, reaching its static apotheosis at a fogbound baseball game in which the players drift in and out of focus like ghosts. The fug of familiarity has become a defamiliarizing fog, perhaps blown in for the day from a Conrad novella. For those critics who hold Tyler's sunny tone and penchant for happy endings against her, here is a reminder that she is also one of contemporary American literature's great melancholics.

What distinguishes Tyler's brand of melancholy is the way she gently ribs it with low-key social comedy. "I'm not really planning anything that definite yet," Delia explains to two new women acquaintances, as they watch what they can of the baseball. "Well, of course you're not," replies one. "I'm really feeling sort of . . . blank right now." "Of course you are!" they both chirrup in unison. It's a lovely exchange—Jean-Paul Sartre pops in on the local sewing circle—and one that illustrates the fact that optimism isn't so much the mood of Tyler's work as it is her working method. Gradually, the plot of "Ladder of Years" accumulates like so much affectionately hoarded household clutter. Those two acquaintances become Delia's friends. She adopts a stray cat. Then, after responding to a newspaper ad for a housekeeper, she assumes responsibility for the lives of a local father and son. Fondness rescues her life from formlessness.

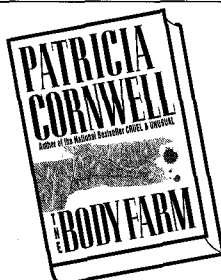
When news of an engagement in her real family reaches her, Delia is faced with the task of choosing between her two households, and Tyler, in that miraculous way of hers, seems to pluck page-turning urgency from thin air. "Ladder of Years" feels, indeed, like the story of a woman who thought she could prune her life down to a short story, only to find it blooming, unexpectedly, into an Anne Tyler novel. There can be few more delightful revelations. ♦



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RECOMMENDED READING

Moo
by Jane Smiley
(Knopf; \$24)

As a writer, Jane Smiley can accomplish anything—including, apparently, transforming herself into David Lodge. This metafiction, set in a sprawling Midwestern university known as Moo, concerns an economics professor who's cozy with corrupt Latin-American governments and rapacious corporations, a seven-hundred-pound hog named Earl Butz, many couples in and out of love, and a secretary who quietly runs the whole place. As usual, Smiley knows more than seems likely about everything from equine management and the niceties of butchering to—of course—the nuances of how people feel and behave toward animals of their own species.

Cock-a-Doodle-Do
by Philip Weiss
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$21)

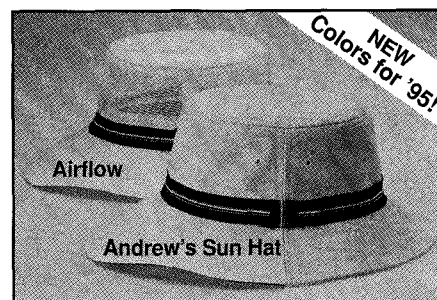
When Jack Gold, the son of a think-tank lefty, beds Burry Quinlan, the daughter of a powerful Democratic candidate, during a New York election campaign, the angry young lover feels like a great pretender. Even when he finds evidence of articulate idealism amid the swank debauchery, Jack still can't join the party. The personal is too political, and the politics are too Page Six for him, but this roman à clef has no such qualms: it luxuriates in the gleeful spite of its calculated and perfectly phrased gossip.

**Minding the Children:
Child Care in America from Colonial
Times to the Present**
by Geraldine Youcha
(Scribners; \$26)

From this lively, open-minded history we learn that the two-parent family in which the father goes to work while the mother stays home and raises the children to adulthood was a recent cultural invention that many Americans could not afford. Youcha discusses mammies and nannies, orphanages and boarding schools, foster care and day care. Her conclusion? The national experience with childcare has been one of "bewildering variety," and one system seems to work as well—or as badly—as any other.

Principal Products of Portugal
by Donald Hall
(Beacon; \$23)

This is Hall at large, ruminating on the subjects that never fail to move him: baseball, poetry, poets, reading, the rough terrain of home. These essays have been gathered from all over the place, and by collecting them here Hall has made a point about the freelance writer's life, which is, he says, "an economics of thrust and repulse, with the goal of making art—breeding cats for the love of dogs—and staying alive."



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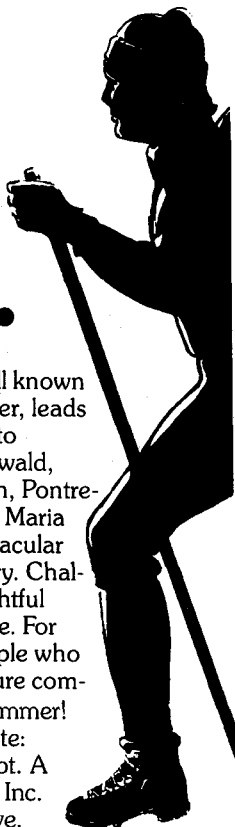


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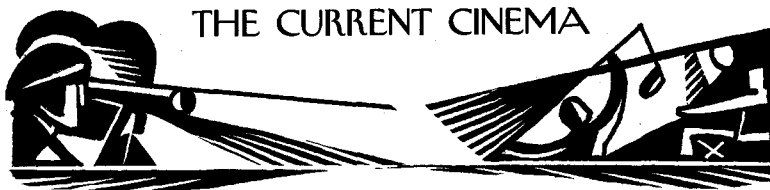
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THE CURRENT CINEMA

UNDER STALIN'S SUN

From Russia, with Oscar—a new film by Nikita Mikhalkov.

BY ANTHONY LANE

THIS year's Academy Awards ceremony was, even by the standards of recent years, a real stiff. It takes a great wave of money and effort to create that kind of style-free zone. The one bright spot in a gloomy, graceless evening came with the arrival onstage of a large Russian gentleman with a wide smile, an even wider mustache, and a very small daughter. His name was Nikita Mikhalkov, and he was there to accept the award for

winners trotted up, gripped their statuettes, and proceeded to speed-thank their entire family tree: parents, grandparents, godparents, babies yet to be born, cave-dwelling ancestors on the Kalahari plains, DNA spirals. In the midst of all this, it was stirring to find a man who had brought his daughter with him for the very good reason that she was also his leading lady. At the end of his speech, Mikhalkov hauled her up with one hand and threw



A long day's journey: Oleg Menchikov, Ingeborga Dapkunaite, Nadia Mikhalkov, and Nikita Mikhalkov in "Burnt by the Sun."

Best Foreign Language Film for his latest picture, "Burnt by the Sun." The little girl at his side was eight-year-old Nadia, and she appeared to be less fazed by the occasion than anyone else in the building. She stared out at the stars with equanimity, presumably asking herself what a Gump was and why everyone kept talking about it. The terrible thing about Oscar Night is that the true emotions sound even phonier than the phony ones, and this particular show was no exception. Award

her onto his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. I'm only sorry that Quincy Jones didn't try the same thing with Oprah Winfrey.

What most of the audience couldn't have known was that this nonchalant gesture was a visual quotation from "Burnt by the Sun," in which Mikhalkov happily performs the same hoist. Not only did he direct the movie and collaborate on the screenplay, with Rustam Ibragimbekov; he also plays the hero, a Red Army colonel named

Sergei Kotov. Nadia Mikhalkov plays Kotov's daughter—also called Nadia, just to confuse the issue. She first appears naked, squatting like a jockey on her father's bare back and whipping him lightly with a brush of birch branches. There are probably people who have this sort of image delivered to them in a plain brown wrapper through the mail, but don't worry: it is a fine summer's day in 1936, and the Kotov family are merely enjoying a healthful steam in a rural hut. Kotov's young wife, Marusya (Ingeborga Dapkunaite), is there, too, half naked and smiling. Everything is just dandy: God's in his Heaven—or, at any rate, Stalin's in his Kremlin, which comes to the same thing—and all's right with the world.

The movie's charm, which runs pretty deep, arises from this unfashionable view of pleasure as something bountiful, close at hand, and casually attained. What makes the tale more than charming, and gives it real heft, is Mikhalkov's willingness to show that same pleasure dying in front of your eyes—to watch the poison of a political system creeping into the characters' veins. He has tried the trick twice before, in "A Slave of Love" and "Dark Eyes," but this is the first time it has come off; for once, the bliss and the menace seem to flow from a single source. The plot of "Dark Eyes" rambled from Italy to Russia, and offered a turn-of-the-century period elegance that stretched and bulged into kitsch; the whole of "Burnt by the Sun"—apart from a short Moscow prologue and epilogue—is set in and around a single dacha on a single day, and the languor is curbed and compacted until it feels like a well-mannered offshoot of Surrealism. There are still plenty of folk wandering around in soft white suits, but by the end they strike you as victims not of style but of history—inmates in a vast national asylum. The fact that the villain, Mitya (Oleg Menchikov), dresses like a dapper English cricketer somehow makes him even more lethal.

Kotov shares the house with his wife and daughter, plus a selection of elderly creatures whom I couldn't quite work out. There's nothing vague about this—just a pleasing sensation of surplus, which fits the movie nicely. (It's an action-packed picture, if by "action" you

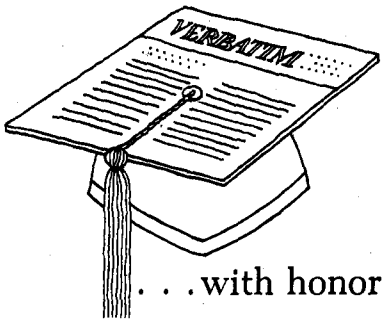
mean such violent pursuits as teacup-trembling, woodland soccer, and jumping fully clothed off river jetties.) I counted at least three grandma contenders in the Kotov home, but they could well have been aunts; there's also a friendly, fleshy maid, who starts to cry when her dusting prowess is called into question, and a relaxed old sport named Vsevolod who spends most of his time reading the paper, and whose immaculate apathy prompts an inspired gibe from one of the women. "You're like *Switzerland*," she says. Then, there is Kirik (Vladimir Ilyine), an uncle of sorts, whose role in life, if he has one, is almost as ill-defined as his sexuality. He minces, rides a bicycle in to breakfast, wears a hairnet, and kisses Mitya on the cheek—a bad move, by any measure. On the other hand, he also makes eyes at a visiting young woman, takes her to his bedroom, and makes her hold a soccer ball while he leeringly pumps it up.

Ilyine's performance is oversized and very nearly bad: a cadenza of pouts and frowns, of grimaces directed at nobody and provoked by nothing in particular. But Mikhalkov must have let him run, and the risk pays off: the acting mocks the trim-fitting politesse that tends to constrain this kind of production, roughing it up into bagginess. The movie is much less tasteful than it could have been, and all the more likable as a result. The master of this method, of course, was Jean Renoir: he would violate the strolling naturalism of his scenes by encouraging his players—Michel Simon, above all—to go for big, vaudeville gestures. This near-caricature works best in a pastoral setting, perhaps because it calls up memories, or myths, of lascivious satyrs: Boudu tumbles back into his element, the gliding Seine; the skinny young lecher in "Une Partie de Campagne" dances after his matronly prey with a panpipe, and twirls his mustache with a ridiculous flourish. (Kotov, in "Burnt by the Sun," twirls his the same way.) Mikhalkov has none of Renoir's economy—his movie is over three times as long as "Une Partie de Campagne," and rather more confused—but he has inherited some of Renoir's imaginative frankness. He openly confronts our expectations, saying, Yes, my character is larger than life, but that is your fault for finding life too



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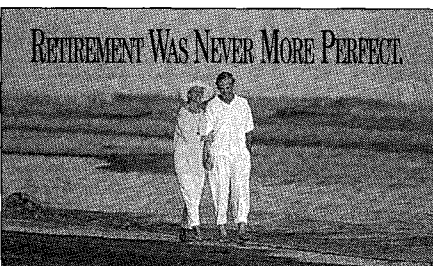
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small—there should be room for everyone, for everything under the sun.

And the sun is Stalin. It is his presence that reddens the movie with fear and apprehension. At one point, a giant balloon rises over a wheat field; hanging beneath it is a banner of the great leader himself—borne aloft by hot air into a clear sky, from which he can survey and scorch his people. Stalin's representative on earth is Mitya, the smooth young man who drops in to visit the Kotov family. At first, all is sweetness and light: Mitya knows something about everyone, something innocent and silly—you would think he had files on them all. He charms the elderly, delights the young, and casually smolders at his old flame, Marusya. The erotic play between these two is the best thing in the film: as Mitya continues his banter off-camera, Marusya stands backlit, with the sun shining through her dress, and listens, sapped of everything but the will to hear more. She falls into a sort of private slow motion, at once dozy and turned on, while life continues around her at normal speed; she tries to fill a glass from the tap, and the water wells smoothly over the rim. When she's drinking it, she gulps and swallows as if she were trying to fill herself up, or put out a fire.

This central section of the story shows Mikhalkov working at an extraordinary, intuitive pitch. He specializes in averted melodrama: a shard of broken bottle lies in wait for bare feet, but the feet keep missing it by an inch; Mitya plays the piano in the nude, but only Marusya sees the show—he's just out of our line of sight, and anyway what matters is the indignant giggle on her face. Whenever important events curve into view, Mikhalkov's attention wanders elsewhere, as if he were following up a rumor or tracing a whisper in the next room. You could accuse him of simply rehashing Chekhov, who specialized in offstage drama, in stories that unfolded at arm's length, but Mikhalkov has done something new: he has taken that technique and applied it to a political bad dream. To exist under Stalin was indeed to be heard by ears pressed to the wall—to do your own thing while someone else, close by, finalized plans to start doing it for you. When it emerges that Mitya is a member of Stalin's secret police, come

to arrest Kotov on ludicrous charges, we are not remotely surprised; in the Soviet Union in 1936, there was not much difference between lover and spy.

"Burnt by the Sun" covers a lot of ground. As the long, lovely day descends into talk of treachery, and from there into boozing and bloody faces, we seem to leave Chekhov a thousand miles behind. "It's the aroma, the taste of life that has vanished," Vsevolod says. What touches you most is not the individual fates of the characters but a feeling that the nostalgic style has been found wanting—that, while Mikhalkov has disinterred the graceful past, a delicate shroud has fallen away and exposed something wormy and decayed. All of which makes the movie sound about as cheery as a game of strip chess with Uncle Joe himself, yet, oddly, it is good for the spirits. It may have been the serpentine Mitya who tried to seduce Marusya, but it is Sergei who picks up the scent of arousal: husband and wife have great afternoon sex in the loft—all the spicier for a pinch of jealousy. As the happiness starts to flicker, Mikhalkov keeps an eye out for signs of life, and he finds them in unlikely places. Many of them come from Nadia Mikhalkov, who gives one of those penetrating, absolutely uncute performances with which children sometimes startle the most grownup of movies: "You're eating because you've been drinking," Nadia says to Kirik, an accusation against which there is no defense. When a long black car arrives to collect her father—and, in so doing, to pluck her life clean of all joy—she goes out to greet it, studies her reflection in the headlight, and tidies her hair. She is sweetly serious, and she makes the murderous types in the car look like infant goons. They drive Kotov away, warning him not to do anything stupid. "Like what?" he asks. "I did the stupid things ages ago." Does he mean the mistakes he made or the fun he had? Sexy and involving, scrappy and laid-back, "Burnt by the Sun" is a wonderful reminder of the basic human right to do the wrong thing. ♦

Like most of her classmates at Lunt Elementary School, 4-year-old Bianca Sosa's parents worked hellish hours in smoky casinos to make ends meet.—*Los Angeles Times*.

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THE THEATRE



THE BATTLE OF THE VANITIES

Ingmar Bergman masters "The Misanthrope" in Stockholm.

BY JOHN LAHR

ALCESTE, the central figure of Molière's comedy "The Misanthrope" (1666), is probably the greatest refusenik in dramatic literature. He makes the dour Ancient Mariner look like a party animal. He is in the grip of a terrible fury at the sinfulness of the world, a man drawn both to the life of the court and to the flesh but unable to abide the fallibility of either. He will accept life only on his own terms of impossible purity. "I wish no place in a dishonest heart," he proclaims. Among literature's heroes of absurd negativity—Kafka's Hunger Artist, Melville's Bartleby the scrivener—Alceste, with his clownish outbursts, is surely the funniest. He's adolescent hell on a short fuse; he rails against the vanity of the corrupt and acts out the vanity of the righteous. But how honest is Alceste? This is the question that Ingmar Bergman explores in his third attempt at the play (he directed earlier productions in 1957 and 1973), on the main stage of the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden, in Stockholm. In Bergman's reinterpretation, Alceste's idealism is a mask for his sexual

jealousy, and Alceste himself is as much a victim of appearances as the world he hectors. What Bergman engineers in masterly style is both a wonderful comedy of manners and a subtle dissection of the nature of manners themselves. "The Misanthrope" is the third in a trio of monumental Bergman productions. The previous two—Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale" and Yukio Mishima's

"Madame de Sade"—will be presented in late May and early June at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, as part of a city-wide Bergman festival; "The Misanthrope" will come to BAM in the spring of 1996. Taken together, these are the finest displays of stagecraft I have ever seen.



Thorsten Flinck as Alceste and Jarl Kulle as Oronte at the Royal Dramatic Theatre.

The curtain comes up on a painted scrim of Watteau's "La Partie Quarrée": three seated figures and a standing Pierrot figure, whose back is to us, are shown conversing against a background of Arcadian tranquillity. But comedy, in general, and "The Misanthrope," in particular, are anything but tranquil. The scrim makes a spectacle of pastoral containment—an approach that Bergman immediately be-

PAUL DAVIS

gins to test in the realm of manners. Another Pierrot figure, this one in the flesh and facing us, watches from the side of the stage as the scrim starts to play tricks on our comforting sense of coherence. A peephole opens in the gold skirt of one of the Watteau maidens, and an actor peers through it, then waves. Behind the curtain, there are sounds of laughing and then screaming, then a sudden silence, then the clatter of pails, and then the scrim itself starts to wobble, as if shaken by a poltergeist. The contradiction between the serene surface and the rowdiness behind it becomes, as we soon discover, the theme of the play.

When the scrim rises, we see the entire cast, in all its fustian regalia, about to begin a game of blindman's bluff. Alceste's beloved Célimène (the gorgeous Lena Endre) has been blindfolded and is being spun around in the middle of a circle by Pierrot, who is the spirit of comedy and Bergman's alter ego. The dance—the ritualized dance of manners, which Veblen called “a symbolic pantomime of mastery on the one hand and of subservience on the other”—begins around her. Célimène's groping is a metaphor of the play's inquiry. At issue here is not just whom Célimène will favor as her lover but how to find and hold on to status, how to search out who and what are real. Alceste (the handsome Thorsten Flinck, wearing an austere black frock coat) breaks out of the dancing circle in disgust, stopping the game just as Célimène finds herself on her knees, fondling the crotch of one of her foppish suitors, Oronte (played with superb swagger by Jarl Kulle). As the moment has been choreographed, by Donya Feuer, it captures in one unforgettable image the polarities of libertine court life: a hypocritical world of social constraint and sexual concupiscence, veering, as it were, between snow jobs and blow jobs.

The game of blindman's bluff leads swiftly into a procession, with the actors walking upstage through large green doors, beyond which an array of delicacies, on a sumptuous candlelit banquet table, is briefly glimpsed. No sooner have the doors closed behind the court revellers than they open again and Alceste is flung out. He sprawls downstage in front of us, his knees bleeding and his dander up. The scrim, the

dance, the banquet, and the expulsion are all part of Bergman's brilliant preamble to Molière. The play proper begins with Philinte (Thomas Hanzon) asking his friend Alceste, “Now, what's got into you?” (The play is performed in Swedish; I'm using Richard Wilbur's English translation.) The answer, it turns out, is nothing. Alceste can't partake of life's banquet. He is a kind of moral anorexic, who won't take in the world except in his own irrational and controlling way. Alceste spoils things for the world while claiming that the artificiality of court life is spoiling him. He lectures Philinte:

Ah, no! we should condemn with all our force
Such false and artificial intercourse.
Let men behave like men; let them display
Their inmost hearts in everything they say;
Let the heart speak, and let our sentiments
Not mask themselves in silly compliments.

In the abstract, Alceste's indictment rings true, but in reality what Alceste is proposing is a form of social suicide. Philinte politely suggests to him:

Wouldn't the social fabric come undone
If we were wholly frank with everyone?

Alceste won't gild any lily. What he misses—and what Molière and Bergman understand—is the essential theatricality at the core of personality, “personality” being a word whose Latin root means “mask.” Manners are the ritual care that human beings—little deities of a self-created universe—require as worship: the ceremony that insures for the participants a sense of public congruence with their idealized selves. To maintain “social face,” some form of dissimulation is necessary: seeming prevails over being. “The Misanthrope” is all about the protecting, the hiding, and the refusing of “face.” In this production, Alceste frequently stands turned away from others. He wants to remove his face from public view, to avoid the inevitable collusion that manners require:

Sometimes, I swear, I'm moved to flee and find,
Some desert land unfouled by human kind.

When, in Act I, Oronte flounces in, his speech piled as high with rhetorical flourishes as his periwig is with blond curls, Alceste won't make a symbolic show of friendship. It's a hilarious battle of the vanities. Oronte fishes for compliments from Alceste for the banal son-

net he has penned. But Alceste refuses to reflect even a smidgen of Oronte's grandiosity back to him.

ORONTE: Others have praised my sonnet to the skies.

ALCESTE: I lack their art of telling pleasant lies.

Oronte, with his good manners, tries to disarm Alceste, but his subsequent humiliation leads him first to pull his sword on Alceste and then to pull a fast one by supporting another man's suit against Alceste for slander. “Social face,” the sociologist Erving Goffman wrote, “is only on loan . . . from society; it will be withdrawn unless [the individual] conducts himself in a way that is worthy of it.” Manners, inevitably, put mankind under wraps.

THE twin predicaments of manners—self-inflation and self-imprisonment—are translated with spectacular success in the exaggerated silhouettes of Charles Koroly's magnificent costumes; they go beyond the baroque to the rococo. “It's screwed-up rococo,” Koroly told me. “This rococo does not exist, it's so completely artificial. It's as if we had created a world of beautiful and poisonous insects.” Koroly, who spent ten months designing the costumes, most of which weigh about twenty pounds apiece, added, “Rococo is not coming close to other people or being close to your own feelings. It's being encapsulated in a mannerism and a form of manners.” In a sense, Koroly's costumes are the real set of the play; Bergman has kept his stage almost bare, so the actors can give full meaning to the bulky carapaces of fabric which house them. From the second week of Bergman's eight-week rehearsal schedule, the cast was wearing the show's coats, shoes, crinolines, and corsets, not just to eliminate obstacles in wearing them but to let the costumes inform the artificiality of the characters. In such outfits, you can't sit, stand, walk, or breathe in a natural way, and the architecture of unnaturalness brings its own inevitable mutation of character.

Alceste is besotted by Célimène, who is his exact emotional opposite: warm, witty, politic, mature, calm. The alluring Célimène is given the most seemingly natural of silhouettes. Bergman stages Célimène's second appearance boldly: she is lolling over breakfast with Alceste in her pale-green canopied bed. As Célimène, Lena Endre is potent



stuff: a radiant intelligence. Her loose-fitting white linen negligee and her mane of auburn hair signal spontaneity and naturalness. The illusion engendered by someone as physically exquisite and fresh as Célimène is that she must also be morally exquisite. "All your speeches are enraged and rude," she tells Alceste, dabbing jam on his impertinent nose. "I've never been so furiously wooed." Endre could send the salmon upstream in the flintiest of male hearts; and the appearance of two courtly dandies at her levee—the smug Acaste (clever Mats Bergman), who lubriciously dangles a cameo from its fob into the open mouth of a kneeling servant girl, and the epicene Clitandre (the leggy and ludicrous Claes Månsson), who flashes a long red nail on his little finger—fuels Alceste's jealousy. To Célimène, Alceste's passion only confirms the power of her sexual appeal and its novelty value in the ritualized tedium of court philandering.

Alceste, who is an expert at lying to himself, claims to be incapable of dissimulation; but the flirtatious Célimène is a master of it. She faces down the puritanical Mme. Arsinoé (the superb Agneta Ekmanner), who fancies Alceste herself, and who scuttles around the stage, in a layered purple-black dress, like an Egyptian scarab; clutching a prayer book, she delivers salvos of spite in a pinched voice full of piety. "One must avoid the outward show of vice," Arsinoé warns Célimène, who for most of this sensational war of words has her back turned to Arsinoé or glides around her, so that her face never loses its marvellous composure under the older woman's onslaught of malice. Ekmanner, who radiates a regal inner fire, has a field day in the role. Her austere elegance and the frozen angularity of her neck and hands reinforce her starchy propriety as Célimène herself goes on the attack. Célimène says, "When all one's charms are gone, it is, I'm sure / Good strategy to be devout and pure." Arsinoé takes revenge on her by showing Alceste a compromising letter from Célimène to Oronte. (She later provides him with letters from *all* of Célimène's suitors.) When Alceste confronts Célimène with the letter, she is calmly arranging roses in a vase whose dragon design is the only predatory clue; she brushes her face occasionally with a bloom as she gives him a disarming answer. "Pretend, pre-

tend, that you are just and true," Alceste begs, dropping to his knees and holding her hand to his cheek. "And I shall make myself believe in you." Significantly, at this moment of crisis Alceste has more faith in his powers of denial than in the power of love. Célimène touches his face, and in that gesture—electric with feeling and with irony—she brazens it out: "Just why should I *pretend*?"

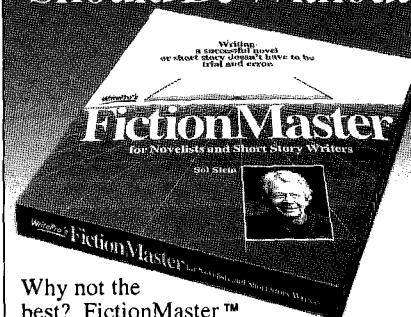
By Act V, Alceste, scandalized by the victory against him in the courts for slander, is almost levitating with rage. He fumes to Philinte:

This age is vile, and I've made up my mind
To have no further commerce with mankind.

Here the intemperate Alceste suddenly walks through an upstage wall. The spectacle is hilarious, and Alceste's notorious virtue takes another pratfall when Oronte forces Célimène to choose between him and Alceste. This turns into a kind of jamboree of humiliation, during which all Célimène's lovers and the hated Arsinoé (now dressed in a harsh black-and-red gown and emitting little squeals of vindictive triumph from behind her fan) congregate across the width of the proscenium to witness Célimène being confronted with her own bitchy private thoughts about her lovers as Acaste reads them aloud. Célimène is turned toward the audience with chagrin on her face and nowhere to hide. Faced with true feeling, society collapses around her. One by one, the betrayed men exit, pouring scorn on Célimène's beautiful, turned head, which she struggles to hold high. Acaste is the last to leave. He approaches Célimène in her humiliation and holds out a fan—the instrument for saving face and "composing herself"—and then, in a huge theatrical moment, drops the fan at her feet as he exits. It's a chilling revenge.

Alceste offers to marry the ostracized Célimène, but on the condition that they go "To that wild, trackless, solitary place / In which I shall forget the human race." Célimène protests that she is only twenty and would be bored. She starts to make another proposal, but Alceste cuts her off in a rage. She will accept life on his terms or not at all. He rejects her out of hand. Alceste cannot take anything in but himself; he is incapable, finally, of any mutuality. Quite naturally, in this production, Célimène runs screaming from him. Alceste then

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makes a breathtaking volte-face and, in the next beat, is talking about proposing marriage to Célimène's cousin, the idealistic Eliante (Nadja Weiss). When she confesses her love for Philinte, Alceste bids them, and us, a self-pitying farewell:

Meanwhile, betrayed and wronged in everything I'll flee this bitter world where vice is king, And seek some spot unpeopled and apart Where I'll be free to have an honest heart.

Alceste's flight from court life is also a flight from his own problematic inner life. His legendary negativity is shown in Bergman's majestic production to be a

defense against any emotional surrender.

On opening night, the burghers of Stockholm began clapping politely at the end of the play, as if surprised that Molière's comedy should come to such an abrupt and unsettling conclusion. But by the third curtain call, quite unexpectedly, the applause turned to stomping. After a while, the audience seemed to rise en masse from the plush blue seats and kept up the huzzahs for about ten minutes, until both they and the actors were exhausted. The Swedes know greatness when they see it. ♦

WORDS OF LOVE

"A Month in the Country" and "A Language of Their Own."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

YOU don't have to dig very deep to get to the heart of Turgenev's "A Month in the Country," now at the Roundabout, under the direction of Scott Ellis. The dilemmas it poses and the satisfactions it offers are right on the surface—it's the theatrical equivalent of a good beach read (an association fostered in part by Santo Loquasto's spare, airy set, all tasteful pale wood and long, gauzy white curtains: a Hamptons dream dacha). Written in 1850 and set on a Russian estate in the eighteen-forties, the play is a tale of female selfishness and self-delusion in the sphere of love, and its central character, Natalya Petrovna, calls to mind any number of similar literary creations, ranging from the high end to the low end—from Emma Bovary to Scarlett O'Hara. In Chekhov's plays set on provincial estates, the comedy is an outgrowth of despair, but in "A Month in the Country" (Turgenev's only major work for the stage) we're given no bitter pill to swallow. What's on display here is a kind of human folly that's more palatable. It's Chekhov without tears.

As Natalya Petrovna, the mainspring of the play's farcical energy, Helen Mirren is a long way from her hardworking,

sleep-deprived Inspector Jane Tennison of the TV show "Prime Suspect." Mirren's Natalya Petrovna doesn't look any farther than the mirror for clues; she's fascinated by her own boredom, and her endless self-examination has led not to self-knowledge but to self-dramatization. She treats her friend Rakitin (Ron



Romantic fantasy and reality: Helen Mirren and Ron Rifkin in "A Month in the Country."

Rifkin), who is in love with her, like a lapdog, and breezily ignores her husband, Arkady Sergeich (Byron Jennings, whose handsomeness and great height make this gentleman farmer's boyish enthusiasm about his new threshing fetchingly silly). Mirren leaves no aspect of Natalya Petrovna's foolishness un-

plumbed, and the changes in her voice and expression register all the character's desperate attempts to turn her romantic fantasy life into reality. It has dawned on her that she's in love with her son's tutor (Alessandro Nivola), who is a mere twenty-one years old. The high point of the evening is the runaway train of a soliloquy Natalya Petrovna delivers when she realizes her predicament. Mirren is breathtakingly funny as she wrestles with herself—she throws her face into a pillow, then sits up straight, raises her voice, lowers it, and doubles back on her resolutions, all the time watching herself perform. "My God, my God, I'd be better off dead!" she cries. "I think I'm going out of my mind. Oh, stop exaggerating! Well—in a state of shock, then, astonished, amazed that for the first time—yes, for the very first time—I'm in love for the very first time in my life! He must leave."

As the entertaining, cynical local doctor, who has Natalya Petrovna's number (and everyone else's), F. Murray Abraham gives a comic performance that rivals Mirren's. A fast-talking charmer with the heart of a hustler, the doctor is guiltlessly and winningly up front about his ulterior motives. Ron Rifkin's Rakitin is an altogether different sort: he's so attentive to Natalya Petrovna's moods and whims that he seems simply masochistic; then, near the end, when Rakitin sacrifices himself for her sake, the frozen, wan smile that he has worn throughout disappears, and its absence makes you realize the high price he is paying for his devotion. If any one of the characters in "A Month in the Country" reflects its author, it is Rakitin; he is, as Isaiah Berlin said of Turgenev, perceptive, indecisive, scrupulously truthful, and suspended in a state of sympathetic melancholy—in short, recognizably human. It seems fitting that Rifkin's sad face is what lingers in the mind's eye long after the play is over.

A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN," at the Public, marks the New York debut of the twenty-nine-year-old Singaporean playwright Chay Yew, and, under the direction of Keng-Sen Ong, it's an auspicious beginning. The play itself, though, seems to begin inauspiciously: two men stand on a bare stage and talk to each other and to the audience about their relationship. One says,

"I can never forget what he said to me." The other says, "I don't think we should see each other anymore." As they proceed to dissect the unravelling of their life together, you expect the play to fall into a kind of he-said, I-said lockstep—a dreary dissertation on the distance between lovers who have become friends. But something much more delicate happens: the back-and-forth reveals the closeness in distance and the distance in closeness, and when the line "I don't think we should see each other anymore" is repeated, about ten minutes later, after we've learned what caused them to part, the words have an unexpected weight.

The two men, Oscar and Ming (played by Francis Jue and B. D. Wong), are Asian-Americans living in Boston. Oscar is a Chinese immigrant, and Ming is an "A.B.C."—an American-born Chinese—and, in a sense, they don't speak the same language; their cultural differences play a part in their breakup, which is set in motion when Oscar tests positive for H.I.V. and Ming tests negative. Ming speaks his mind, and he says he wants out. Oscar, more "Chinese" when it comes to expressing himself—he can't bear to fight with Ming, or to tell him that he loves him—lets him go.

In the second half of the play, Oscar and Ming are with new boyfriends. Oscar is seeing Daniel (Alec Mapa), a Filipino business student at Harvard, and Ming has moved to California with a handsome blond waiter named Robert (David Drake). Daniel is adorably campy—he says that being with a person who is H.I.V.-positive forces you to act like "June Cleaver on a good hair day"—but he's grounded, and committed to Oscar. (In the theatre these days, flaming queens always possess the virtues one associates with Lassie: steadfastness, loyalty, and courage.) At one point, Daniel tells us that Oscar says "I love you" to him "every moment of the day." Oscar stands behind him, punctuating Daniel's monologue with those three little words, over and over, while Daniel becomes more and more exasperated. It's a punchy, fast scene, and wryly shows how learning too much from your past mistakes can drive another person crazy. Here, and throughout the play, Mr. Yew exhibits a talent for using words that are plain and simple to get at love's rich complications. ♦



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SHOUTS & MURMURS

PROPOSALS FOR WELFARE REFORM

BY DAVID SEDARIS

OUT where we live, there's a lot of young people who pass the time throwing rocks and bottles at mailboxes. During the warmer months, they're likely to open the box and toss in a firecracker or two. How about we take these welfare people and have them pound out the dents in damaged mailboxes. If the box is too far gone, they could dig a post hole and put in a new one. That ought to keep them busy enough, but if they have any time left over maybe they could collect some of the plastic cups and empty candy wrappers that line the roads.

All right now,
THE CALVERTS

Here's a thought: What do you say we take everyone on welfare and train them to act as merrymakers in whatever capacity suits them—singing, dancing, puppetry, massage, whatever! (Anything except standup.) They could reenact some of the funnier television skits or perform bits from movies and plays or provide massage in the nude. Maybe they could do the massage in tents that would be set up on some of the more popular pedestrian malls. This would provide the young welfare mothers with valuable show-business skills, and the rest of us could certainly use a smile.

Just looking for laughs,
KEVIN D.

I work in an office that hires quite a few temps—a shortened version of the word "temperamental." The ficus in our reception area is choking to death on secondhand smoke, but, like the rest of us, it's expected to hold its breath and wait until Caitlin or Brittany schedules that

all-important shampoo commercial or hand-modelling "gig." These temps waltz in whenever it's convenient, carrying portfolios the size of tabletops. Ten minutes into their shift, I'll find them in the Xerox room, running off copies of their résumés or making invitations for their penny-ante poetry readings. Then, following a good two-hour lunch, they're back to apply fresh makeup, tie up the fax machine with head shots, and rip perfume samples from all our magazines. The business world is fed up with these fly-by-nights. Just give us someone who will arrive on time and do the job right. Send in the welfare moms. We've got more than enough work to keep them busy.

PAMELA B.

If you're anything like me, many a day you arrive ten minutes late to work wearing a pair of new shoes that are sparkling at 6:40 A.M., but once that afternoon thundershower kicks in and it's time to punch out you've got two choices: ruin your good shoes or leave

them in your locker and ride the moped home in your socks. I'm thinking it might be smart to take these people on welfare and post them at some of our busier intersections, where they can shout out the time and the weather. While they're at it, they could warn us about traffic bottlenecks or point out Smokeys hidden away in the bushes.

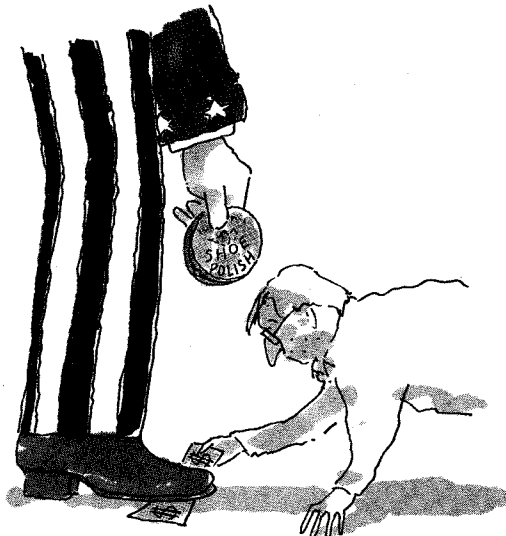
Just an idea,
RED FALSTAFF

In one of my daughter's pamphlets I read that several of our major cosmetics firms maintain labs where they test makeup on wild animals. This upsets the activists, who argue that a rabbit has no business wearing lipstick or eyeshadow. I'm no vegetarian, but I think these people have a point—a good one. What do you say we let the animals free and replace them with some of these welfare divas. From what I've seen, experimenting with toxic levels of blush, mascara, and nail polish is something they'd be doing anyway. Why not kill two birds with one stone and pay them for it?

CONSTANCE SPANKS

The great pyramids of Europe were built by Jews as a punishment for moneylending. It was backbreaking work, but to this day a great deal of Europe's tourist trade is centered on visitors to these same pyramids. It is my suggestion that we force people on welfare to get off their duffs, roll up their sleeves, and build some pyramids for us—preferably in some of the lesser states that have no tourist attractions. Like Delaware or South Dakota. Won't know unless we try!

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